

104

MARKUP OF H. CON. RES. 142 AND BLOODY HANDS: FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR LIBERIAN WARLORDS

Y 4. IN 8/16: B 62

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MARKUP AND HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FOURTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JUNE 26, 1996

Printed for the use of the Committee on International Relations



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CONTENTS

WITNESSES

	Page
Hon. William Twaddell, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State	9
Hon. James Bishop, former U.S. Ambassador to Liberia	21
Mr. Kevin George, President, Friends of Liberia	23
Dr. Elwood Dunn, Professor of Political Science, University of the South	25

APPENDIX

Prepared statements:

Hon. Benjamin A. Gilman	33
Hon. William Twaddell	36
Hon. James Bishop	43
Mr. Kevin George	48
Dr. Elwood Dunn	69

Other material:

"Africa's Forgotten Refugees: Liberians and Other Urban Groups": a report on a U.S. NGO mission to Africa	76
Statement by the Liberian Community Association of Rhode Island	91
Copy of Resolution 142—"Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery"	94



MARKUP OF H. CON. RES. 142 AND BLOODY HANDS: FOREIGN SUPPORT FOR LIBERIAN WARLORDS

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 1996

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA,
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:10 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chair of the subcommittee) presiding.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. The subcommittee will come to order.

Today, the Subcommittee on Africa meets for a dual purpose. First, we will consider in an open session House Concurrent Resolution 142, a resolution regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery. Immediately following the markup, we will proceed to the scheduled hearing on "Bloody Hands: Foreign Support for Liberian Warlords."

But, first, to our markup. House Concurrent Resolution 142 was introduced by a colleague who joins us today, Doug Bereuter, and it has been referred by Chairman Gilman to this subcommittee for consideration. We would like to thank Mr. Bereuter for his interest and his strong commitment in bringing these issues to the forefront.

The Africa Subcommittee, in conjunction with the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, has been following this issue closely, having held a joint hearing to emphasize the gravity of this situation. We welcome the opportunity to focus on this issue once again in the hope that this resolution, along with other measures, will bring about positive change and an end to this horrid system of slavery in Mauritania and, indeed, throughout the Continent.

I would like to now turn to the ranking Democrat on our subcommittee, Mr. Ackerman, for any comments he may have about the Bereuter resolution.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I commend our colleague from Nebraska, Mr. Bereuter, for introducing such an important resolution and you for agreeing to consider it so expeditiously today.

The practice of slavery is abhorrent and repugnant wherever we find it. We should raise our voices in collective opposition to it. Today we are doing just that with regard to Mauritania.

Although Mauritania outlawed slavery in 1980, it is widely believed to persist due to inadequate government efforts to educate slaves regarding their own rights and to punish slaveholders for continuing to own slaves. By allowing slavery to exist, Mauritania is violating such international covenants as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Declaration Against Slavery.

H. Con. Res. 142 sends a clear message that the United States expects the government of Mauritania to abide by international law and vigorously work to eradicate slavery and any of its vestiges and I urge support for the resolution and I thank the Chair profusely.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ackerman.

Pursuant to notice, the subcommittee will now turn to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 142, which the staff director will report.

Mr. TAMARGO. H. Con. Res. 142, Concurrent Resolution. Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection, the staff director will read the preamble and the text of the concurrent resolution in that order for amendment.

Mr. TAMARGO. H. Con. Res. 142, Concurrent Resolution. Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the practice of chattel slavery.

Whereas the government of Mauritania has perpetrated a prolonged campaign of human rights abuses and discrimination against its indigenous black population;

Whereas the Department of State and numerous human rights organizations have documented such abuses;

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection, the preamble and the resolution are considered as having been read and are open to amendment at any point.

Are there any members who would like to make a statement before I recognize Mr. Bereuter?

Mr. Salmon.

Thank you.

We are so pleased to recognize the sponsor of this resolution, the gentleman from Nebraska, Mr. Bereuter.

Mr. BEREUTER. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

I want to express my appreciation to you for your willingness to consider this resolution which addresses human rights in Mauritania. Although I am not a member of your subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to describe H. Con. Res. 142 to members of your subcommittee and any interested parties.

Madam Chairman, I believe that passing H. Con. Res. 142 would help sustain the momentum generated by your excellent hearing held in March on the important topic of slavery in Africa. It is hard to believe that in 1996, chattel slavery continues to exist in Mauritania. This gross injustice infringes on the most fundamental of human rights of perhaps thousands of this country's underclass. Members of this group are considered property of masters and ex-

pected to perform unpaid labor. We applaud the independent investigators such as American journalist, Sam Cotton, who have labored hard to break the conspiracy of silence surrounding this shameful practice.

At this time, I would like to commend efforts by my distinguished colleague from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, of this subcommittee, and my distinguished colleague from California, Mr. Royce, another member of the International Relations Committee, as they have introduced an anti-slavery bill concerning Sudan. This follows the amazing effort by the "Baltimore Sun" reporters to tell a shocking story of slavery in Sudan by actually proceeding to purchase a human being in Sudan. I would like to add my name, and intend to, as an original co-sponsor of their legislation when they introduce it, which targets one of the world's most notorious violators of human rights. So we are not forgetting about Sudan proceeding with this resolution on Mauritania.

But back to Mauritania. It would be bad enough if slavery were the only abuse perpetrated against a certain class of Mauritania's people. Unfortunately, it is only one element of that country's tragic human rights situation. The government has yet to investigate or punish those responsible for the massacre in 1990 and 1991 of over 500 military and civilian Mauritanians, almost entirely from one ethnic group.

The treatment of Mauritania's refugee population is appalling. Despite claims to the contrary by the Mauritanian Government, only a trickle of the 70,000 Mauritanians who were expelled or fled the country from 1989-1990 have been resettled. Most of this group continues to eke out a bleak existence in squalid refugee camps on the Senegalese border stripped of their citizenship and their property in their homeland.

Finally, although Mauritania's citizens are constitutionally guaranteed the right to elect their government, the multi-party election held in 1992 that ended 14 years of military rule were considered fraudulent by the U.S. State Department and other international observers.

Madam Chairman, I hope that this resolution, in combination with your hearing in March and with the efforts of tireless independent investigators, will help convince the government of Mauritania to once and for all abolish slavery and vigorously prosecute violators of existing anti-slavery laws. It is time that all classes of Mauritanians finally be integrated into the full social and economic mainstream of their country, a basic right to which they are fully entitled. I further hope that the attention generated by this resolution will induce Mauritania to schedule free elections and rectify the other injustices I have previously cited.

I would like to mention that I am joined as an original co-sponsor by Mr. Gilman, the Chairman, Mr. Gejdenson, Mr. Hastings of Florida, Mr. Houghton, and Mr. Payne of New Jersey and more recently by Mr. Frazer and Mr. Chabot.

Again, Madam Chairman, I commend your leadership on this issue and I thank you for allowing me to speak here today.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Bereuter.

Mr. Johnston and Mr. Chabot, would you like to make any statements about the resolution?

Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. I will be very brief, Madam Chairman. I want to compliment you for making this markup possible and also my good friend, Congressman Doug Bereuter. He has crafted a very good bill here. I am pleased to support it and to co-sponsor it. Once again, we are witnessing excellent bipartisanship by this committee at the chairwoman's leadership and I know that all of us appreciate the leadership being exercised here today.

I also understand that our distinguished colleague, Mr. Payne of New Jersey, is going to be introducing similar legislation tomorrow with respect to slavery in the Sudan and I commend him for his leadership on this issue. It is almost incomprehensible that slavery still exists in the modern world and I am sure most of the public is probably not aware of it at all and that is why this action is so significant because we need to eliminate slavery wherever it exists, on whatever continent anywhere in this world. And so I strongly support this legislation and I once again commend Mr. Bereuter for offering it and also commend Mr. Payne for offering his with respect to Sudan tomorrow.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Johnston.

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

First, I want to thank Mr. Bereuter, and Mr. Bereuter is stretched awfully thin with other full committees and subcommittees, for his interest in Africa which he has had for a number of years, and ask for his permission that I be included as a co-sponsor.

Thank you.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much, Madam Chairperson.

As an original co-sponsor, I would like to say that I support H. Con. Res. 142 sponsored by Mr. Bereuter, the gentleman from Nebraska, and appreciate the work that he has done on this legislation. I cannot condone any form of slavery, whether in Mauritania, the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, or in the sweatshops of India. I have personally traveled to Sudan and saw firsthand the refugee situation where I stayed in southern Sudan overnight at a refugee camp several years ago with, at that time, Chairman Johnston of the committee.

I will be introducing a bipartisan bill this week to halt slavery at the source. The bill calls for, one, economic sanctions on Sudan; work with the international community to enforce a multilateral embargo. It calls on the State Department to list in its annual human rights report all covert and overt forms of slavery. In addition, a human rights monitor should be assigned to the region and any regions where slavery is suspected.

If I may, I want to submit for the record three articles from the "Baltimore Sun". They contain a series of articles by Gilbert Lewthwaite and Gregory Kane who traveled to the Sudan recently and purchased two slaves to return to their families on April 26 of this year. Just two slaves out of the tens of thousands are free, so we have a very, very long way to go.

Similar proof of the existence of slavery in Mauritania has been provided by a variety of sources. Yet, at our last hearing in March, Representative Shadegg reported that the Country Report on Human Rights states that no vestiges of slavery exist in Mauritania, even though 2 years ago, prior to this report, it stated that 90,000 slaves were being repressed. I just wonder how such a transformation of 90,000 to none could take place without significant reporting and international coverage.

One year ago, I convened a meeting in my office with the president of the Mauritanian senate, Mr. Fava, who was accompanied by Mauritania's ambassador, Mr. Iamha. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss our mutual concern regarding the continued existence of slavery and when both committees held a hearing on slavery in Mauritania and Sudan, to my knowledge, there was no update of what the government was doing to eradicate this terrible practice. I contend that the successful abolition of slavery has not taken place in Mauritania nor Sudan and additional steps must be taken to completely eradicate the practice from the two countries.

We also, about a year ago, at the Congressional Black Caucus, had a hearing on slavery in Mauritania and the Sudan and we had actual witnesses from those countries who testified about the existence of it. And so I commend you, Ms. Chairperson, for calling this markup.

Thank you very much.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Payne, for your leadership on this issue.

Mr. Sanford, would you like to make any statement?

Mr. SANFORD. I do not have a statement. Thank you very much.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Hastings.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Chairwoman, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 142 and ask unanimous consent to revise and extend my remarks and I would have no further opening statement. I just am in strong support of Mr. Bereuter's and Mr. Gilman's efforts in this regard, as well as those of us that have joined as co-sponsors.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Hastings and Mr. Payne. We will put those articles in the record.

Are there any amendments to the resolution?

If there are no amendments, the Chair will put the question on en bloc favorably reporting the resolution to the full committee.

So many are in favor of the question, say yes.

So many are opposed, say no.

The ayes appear to have it. The ayes have it and the resolution is approved for forwarding to the full committee.

We thank you very much, Mr. Bereuter, for your bringing this bill to our attention and we will speak to Mr. Gilman for his prompt consideration of the measure in the full committee. Thank you.

Let us proceed now, if we may, with the hearing today of our subcommittee. As you know, the subcommittee has been extremely concerned about the critical nature of the situation in Liberia for some time, having met in open and closed session to address the ongoing conflict. However, as developments unfold, we are faced

with such horrifying information that we felt it vitally important to hold an immediate hearing on this issue.

Today's hearing on Liberia will focus on a truly disturbing matter. It will examine the role of foreign supporters in maintaining the current civil war in this West African country and in supporting the various factions responsible for the future escalation of the crisis.

The reports of the atrocities being carried out by the various armed factions are so horrible and so inhumane that one wants simply to believe that they are fictional accounts. However, credible sources confirm that we have a situation in Liberia where unspeakable crimes are committed as part of the systematic, calculated policy of terrorizing the population. The brutality exerted by those who constitute the Liberian factions include the practice of ritual human sacrifice and cannibalism as reported by our own Department of State in its human rights report. All the major factions have engaged in this practice.

What is most difficult to comprehend and rationalize is the fact that the leaders of these factions have close ties with the United States. Charles Taylor, Alhaji Kromah and George Boley all were educated in the United States. One would thus have assumed that their training and experiences in this country would have, at the very least, fomented a fundamental respect for human rights and a basic understanding of the principles that are the foundation of a free and stable society. Nevertheless, they have gone back to Liberia to participate in the civil war and perpetuate the most atrocious terrorist acts against their very own people.

And all who promote respect for the basic natural rights of all people would agree that these faction leaders and their armed supporters deserve to be treated as war criminals. Their actions are condemned by those nations across the globe who stand for freedom, democracy and the protection of basic human principles.

Instead, in one of the most troubling aspects of this situation, these factions and their leaders appear to enjoy the support of some of their neighbors. Charles Taylor received the support of the Republic of the Ivory Coast in 1989 when he launched his civil war from territory in the Ivory Coast and, according to information obtained from various sources, he continues to receive that support today, even though the government of the Ivory Coast is aware of the atrocities committed by his faction.

Sources have stated that the Ivory Coast and the Republic of Burkina Faso provide military support to Charles Taylor. Burkina Faso provides the arms and the ammunition in violation of the U.N. arms embargo and the Ivory Coast facilitates the shipment of these contraband arms and ammunition throughout this territory.

The businessmen from these countries have apparently become involved in this operation by facilitating the export of Liberia's natural resources into world markets through the Ivory Coast, thus providing the financial resources for faction leaders to purchase weapons and ammunition from the world gray and black arms markets.

The Republic of Guinea is also reportedly supporting faction leader Kromah, whose troops are engaged in the same campaigns of terror and inhumanity against the Liberian citizens. It seems to

us that for any government to support any of these faction leaders or to tolerate the use of their territory by these warlords is unconscionable.

Such support for these faction leaders legitimizes the violence and the terror, placing the foreign governments in the same category as the warlords themselves. Any government which supports any of these vicious, brutal factions deserves the condemnation of all civilized societies and definitive action should be taken against such governments to emphasize global indignation over their complicity in these horrid war crimes.

These war crimes must be stopped and those who support the perpetrators of these atrocities must be held accountable for their actions. They cannot continue to act with impunity. They cannot be allowed to support massive and unspeakable human rights abuses in Liberia and believe that their relations with the rest of the world will not suffer as a result. These points must be made very clear to the countries which support the Liberian factions and the U.S. Congress is gravely concerned about ending the human rights abuses in Liberia and is committed to ending the illegal arms pipeline and the foreign support for the Liberian warlords.

I would like to, before we introduce our first witness, recognize our ranking member, Mr. Ackerman, for any remarks that he would like to make about the abuses in Liberia.

Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Thank you especially for your statement.

We are back again today to discuss the ongoing tragedy in Liberia. The Liberian people have been suffering through a particularly vicious civil conflict since Charles Taylor crossed the border from Cote d'Ivoire in 1989. While this conflict has the all-too-familiar hallmarks of other ethnic conflicts—rape, torture and ritual mutilation—the various factions are also known to dabble in cannibalism as well.

The Liberian tragedy is fueled by a variety of factors: the unending greed of the faction leaders; the ineffective international response; the inability of ECOMOG to keep the peace; and the subject of today's hearing, the relationships between the faction leaders and neighboring countries.

Of the major factions, Charles Taylor's relationships with Cote d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso are well-known, as is Alhaji Kromah's relationship with Guinea. The flow of arms across the border is fueled by trade in diamonds, timber, rubber and other commodities. The United States and our partners in the contact group must find an effective way to stop the cross-border traffic and establish some penalty for purchasing Liberian resources from the factions. The international community must make it clear that there is a price to pay for dealing with the Liberian warlords. We must also arrive at an effective settlement that stops the fighting, demobilizes and disarms the factions, and establishes a transition government that will lead to elections.

Are the Abuja Accords the foundation on which we will build? Given the track record of the various factions, can any of them be trusted to deal in good faith? Should the faction leaders even be involved in a transition government?

I hope our witnesses today will be able to help us with these questions as we examine the forces, both internal and external, that rack Liberia.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ackerman.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Ms. Chairperson. Let me commend you again for calling this very important hearing on foreign support for the Liberian warlords.

It is evident that we still need to heal the wounds of a civil war in Liberia. As I mentioned in the last meeting we had, if we had only properly dealt with the situation in 1990, even former Assistant Secretary of State, Hank Cohen, agrees that it would be highly unlikely that we would be here today discussing this problem. It was felt that if we had intervened, removed Doe from his hold-up in Monrovia, that the civil strife would have ended at that time. But we did not because of other world problems.

As you know, the conflict in Liberia began in 1989 and has resulted in the deaths of more than 200,000 men, women and children. It has also caused the mass exodus and it is considered that nearly one million people of Liberia are still in West African countries. At one point, it was 2.5 million of its small population of about six million that was out of the country. These refugees are suffering in camps, many of which are below human standards.

On May 26, we were told that the fighting had stopped and that people were returning to their homes. However, days later, we heard that a group of those Liberian rebels staged a border incursion into the western Ivory Coast town, killing 14 and wounding several others.

The United States is in the best position of any nation to give strong leadership at this critical moment. This prompted me to sponsor a bill with Mr. Campbell, newly appointed member of this subcommittee—of course, not new to the Congress—but he has consented to co-sponsor the legislation. The bill calls for the United Nations to impose a ban on all trade in primary commodities with Liberia until such time as a democratic government is elected and comes to power. Sanctions against those parties violating the U.N. arms embargo on Liberia encourages the United States not to recognize any government in Liberia that achieves power through violence and warfare. It also commends the United States for the successful evacuation of over 2,000 people from Liberia.

I had a number of meetings in my office with many Liberian organizations. Working groups have met with Assistant Secretary Hank Cohen, Assistant Secretary Chester Crocker, Mr. Leonard Robinson, Jim Bishop and many others as we talked about attempting to come up with some solution to this problem. We need to put an end to the violence. I hope that we will be able to do this and not let all of our recent hard work that we have done over the past years go for naught.

Once again, Ms. Chairlady, I commend you for calling this very important hearing. Thank you.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Chabot.

Thank you.

Mr. Hastings or Mr. Johnston.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Chairwoman, I will be very brief. I want to thank you for holding this hearing and to indicate, among other things, my continuing dismay at our failure to address Liberia in a meaningful way at the highest levels of the Administration.

I would like to point out the extraordinary work that has been done by Secretary Moose as well as others in this arena. But it just is not enough and we are going to have to do considerably more. And I hasten to add that African Americans need to be heard louder on the subject of Liberia, perhaps as much, if not more so, than any of the countries in Africa, because of the history that has been outlined so adequately in other hearings by Chairman Payne in that regard.

Also, kudos, Madam Chairman, are deserving of Ghana and other countries that have tried their very level best to involve themselves in a way that would bring resolution to this conflict.

Additionally, I would like to thank your predecessor, Harry Johnston, for efforts that he put forward, as well as yourself, Madam Chairwoman, in bringing this grave situation to the light so that hopefully we will have considerably more involvement.

I think I already know the answers to this hearing with reference to how the guns and war material are getting there. But I do not believe that we are going to solve the problem by hearing how the problem is generated. Somewhere along the lines, we are going to have to do some new and creative things in Liberia and in Africa and I thank you for the opportunity to address the subject today, Madam Chair.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Hastings.

And now I would like to introduce our first witness, Ambassador Bill Twaddell, who appears before us today as Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Affairs. His service to this country began in 1963 as a Peace Corps volunteer, followed by his service in the United States Army from 1965 to 1967. Two years later, in 1969, he joined the foreign service where he has served in various capacities in Washington, DC and in the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. He was assigned as Deputy Chief of Mission in Mozambique, where he has also served as interim charge des affairs until 1983 when he was detailed to the Coast Guard Academy. He has served as director of the United States Liaison Office in Namibia, as interim charges des affairs in Guinea Bissau, and as ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and as Chief of Mission in Monrovia, Liberia from 1992 to 1995.

Your list of accomplishments is quite extensive, so I think I will stop there so we have enough time for our hearing.

Thank you so much, Mr. Ambassador. We appreciate you being here.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM TWADDELL, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. TWADDELL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Members of the committee, good afternoon.

I am pleased to report that the situation in Liberia has improved since Assistant Secretary Moose met with you here in early May.

The city of Monrovia has been relatively calm for 1 month. Some fighters of Charles Taylor's NPFL and of Alhaji Kromah's ULIMO-K have left the city and others generally are observing the "no guns on the streets" dictum of the West African Peacekeeping Force, ECOMOG. The stand-off at Barclay Training Center is resolved with the fighters of Roosevelt Johnson's ULIMO-J having left the Center unarmed. ECOMOG is deployed throughout the city and is seizing arms caches and exerting its authority to reestablish the safe haven.

The U.S. Government is energetically pursuing the opportunity provided by relative restoration of calm in Monrovia to push for resumption of the peace process. Our strategy remains consistent with what we described to you in May. Its core elements include: increased support to ECOMOG; enhanced diplomatic efforts aimed at encouraging maintenance of cease-fire; restoration of the Abuja peace process; and stepped-up pressure on the faction leaders to cooperate.

As Secretary Moose said in May, we believe the Abuja Accord, which provides for an interim government, disarmament and the holding of free and fair elections, continues to be the best framework for a permanent solution. ECOMOG remains key to achieving this goal. The early August ECOWAS summit will be critical. West African leaders will measure the progress toward reestablishing the peace process and take decisions regarding their continued involvement. We remain convinced that faction leaders must be made to see their interest is best served by the reestablishment of a functioning national government and the disarmament and demobilization of fighters.

The last point, keeping pressure on faction leaders, is closely related to the timely topic we are here to discuss today. The ability of the faction leaders to find collaborators in the international community to whom to sell illicit Liberian commodities to provide the wherewithal to arms merchants to procure and deliver weapons and munitions, is at the core of the tragedy of this seemingly endless conflict. Breaking this vicious circle is critical to ending the war.

Regarding the arms trade, a steady flow of arms and munitions to Liberia's warring factions has kept the Liberian conflict going for over 6 years. Our information about this trade is sketchy and has gaps, but does lead to some conclusions. Almost all weapons currently reaching Liberia transit countries in the region, rather than arrive by sea directly in Liberia. Which country they transit depends on which faction is the intended recipient.

Illicit cross-border trade in Africa is not uncommon because of the porous borders. The extent to which arms transfers to Liberia reflect conscious national government policy of those countries is difficult to gauge. Clearly, corrupt local or national government officials and ethnic sympathies make it possible for such transfers to continue even in the face of official policy expressly forbidding them.

Most of the arms and ammunition reaching Liberian factions are purchased on the gray market through private dealers in various countries, primarily in Europe. The NPFL, ULIMO-K and the LPC have been primary recipients of these arms shipments.

Regarding sources of revenue, the steady supply of arms—none of the factions keeps large inventories—depends on a steady supply of money. The primary source of funds appears to be from the sale of commodities from Liberia's trove of natural resources, principally diamonds, timber, gold and rubber.

Publicly available trade statistics suggest the magnitude of revenue available to Liberia's faction leaders from commodity sales. From 1990 to 1994, Liberia's diamond exports averaged \$300 million annually. During the same period, timber exports averaged \$53 million; rubber exports, \$27 million; and gold exports, close to \$1 million. Even taking into account the inevitable smuggling of some of these commodities, principally diamonds and gold, discounts for trafficking in illegal products, and the bribes for officials in countries these products transit, the sums of money available to faction leaders is still very substantial. Charles Taylor, who has long controlled the most lucrative areas of the countryside, could have upwards of \$75 million a year passing through his hands.

Another source of funds, notably since the Abuja Accord of 1995 brought the faction leaders into the ruling Council of State, has been the revenues from Liberia's maritime registry which constitute 90 percent of the Liberian Government's legitimate revenue. Following disbursement to the government last fall of ship registry revenue, there was a notable rise in foreign travel by Liberian faction leaders, especially those on the Council of State and their supporters, who travel in large entourages. Ship registry revenues are about \$16 to \$20 million per annum.

Although the United States is not believed to be a major source of arms for Liberia or a principal recipient of illicit Liberian commodities, it is fertile ground for activities that have contributed to the coffers of Liberian faction leaders. Most of the Liberian faction leaders and their associates—as, Madam Chair, you previously referred to—have spent many years in the United States, often as students, temporary workers, even as permanent residents. They own property, own or operate businesses, and, more importantly, they are familiar with how the U.S. system works and how to make it work for them.

Their activities fall into several major categories: fundraising, investments, scams and the sale of raw materials. The following examples are indicative:

New Horizons is a group based in Providence, Rhode Island, which aggressively solicited funds for several years through a sophisticated newsletter and direct appeals via radio talk shows. In 1994, New Horizons raised over \$2 million, some of which was used to finance the coup attempt of former Doe Government officer, Lieutenant General Charles Julue in his September 1994 coup attempt.

Mr. Charles Taylor either owns or controls a tree service company of that name in Maryland, a legitimate business which reportedly won a contract to provide landscaping services to the city of Baltimore, thereby generating \$2 million monthly to the business.

When negotiations seemed headed toward peace about a year ago, numerous wealthy businessmen in the United States reported contacts from certain Liberians and unsuspecting U.S. church lead-

ers asking them to contribute to a dubious fund to rebuild Liberia. Money contributed later disappeared.

Another scam offered commodity concessions or monopoly business opportunities in gold or diamonds in post-war Liberia at extremely favorable terms. We do not know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars may have been collected in those appeals.

All of this adds up to a pathetic picture—warlords wantonly exploiting their country's resources to keep themselves and their ragtag forces in weapons with virtual international impunity and, in some cases, complicity.

The Administration is keenly interested in putting an end to the United States serving as a source of weapons or funds for faction leaders. However, curbing the generation and expatriation of funds, even when it is probable that they are fueling the Liberian war, is difficult as long as those involved comply with U.S. law. Fundraising activities are not restricted and funds are easily spirited out of the country.

Evidence of arms purchases in the United States, money laundering, transportation of stolen merchandise, non-payment of taxes, non-compliance with asset reporting requirements are easier to combat. But arms are not generally being purchased in the United States and most of the lucrative commodity trade is directed elsewhere. Even were commodities entering the U.S., consider how difficult it would be to prove Liberian origin of timber, for example.

Nevertheless, we continue to seek ways to constrict these activities. As Ambassador George Moose announced in May, the United States reimposed visa restrictions on the faction leaders and their close associates for impeding the peace process by renewing fighting in Monrovia in early April. Discussions with European Union members have resulted in many of them agreeing to follow suit. We are also exploring with our European allies the extent to which other measures might be imposed collectively on Liberian faction leaders if they fail to cooperate with restoration of the peace process.

The U.S. Government firmly believes it is in the interest of all the people of Liberia to end exploitation of Liberia's riches for the illicit benefit of a few to the detriment of the many. With its rich natural resource base, Liberia has the potential to be a wealthy country. Not only is the plunder of Liberia's resources contributing to a continuation of warfare, it is depriving the people of Liberia and future generations of their rightful inheritance.

We believe it is incumbent on all countries to ensure that the U.N. arms embargo against Liberia is not violated within its territory. We have called on its neighboring countries to adhere strictly to the U.N. arms embargo and several U.N. Security Council resolutions on Liberia have urged the international community, as a whole, to do the same.

We have and will continue to urge countries which are aware of violations to bring them to the attention of the U.N. Sanctions Committee. Only then is the United Nations obliged to investigate allegations.

Both aspects should be attacked equally aggressively: the illicit commodity sales that provide the warlords' lucre and the mechanisms of arms delivery. States or individuals engaging in or turn-

tant self-interest because there has been blow-back. There has been violence resulting from the Liberian conflict that has come back into Cote d'Ivoire going back several years and most recently about 10 days ago.

That said, the President of Cote d'Ivoire told a senior American visitor several months ago that in West Africa, money talks. If there is an existing relationship between a local official, a local customs agent, perhaps a local paramilitary official of the Ivorian Government, and a faction across the border, the Ivorian Government is not sufficiently effective in detecting it and stamping it out.

I think there is a great deal of truth in that. We do think the government in Abidjan can do more. Perhaps we can do more to help them. If we are in a position, for example, to identify, through the means that may be available with the application of more resources, some of these flows and share this information with the Ivorian Government, the Ivorians may better intercede when we think arms are coming in or some of that illicit merchandise going out. If we can point the government in Abidjan toward the particular transaction and ask them to intervene—if we can get that kind of information or intelligence assembled quickly and to them and put them to the test of their words, that is, I think, a valid way to proceed.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

We have a vote, but let me have Mr. Hastings ask his questions before we recess temporarily.

Mr. Hastings.

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Chair, I will defer any questioning at this time and perhaps try to come back to the hearing. I just wanted to highlight that we are talking about porous borders when we are talking about whether or not Ivorians or anyone else are going to be able to stop the flow of arms if one is determined to do it.

I thank you, Madam Chair.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. Johnston, would you like to ask a question at this time?

Mr. JOHNSTON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just one quick observation. The three of us were in Cote d'Ivoire, I guess 21 months ago, and they were obsessed with this and the refugees that were pouring in from Liberia and they beat up on us pretty badly because they felt that it was our obligation to get more involved in it.

One quick question here. You have, on page two of your testimony, arms reaching Taylor most likely transmit Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. Those destined for Kromah are likely to pass through Guinea. Some of the Krahn factions have in the past received weapons from Nigeria via Nigerian troops and ECOMOG.

Now, that seems incredible that they would sometimes be taking their weapons to shoot against themselves. What is your authority for that? And I do not question it, but I just think it is rather counterproductive.

Mr. TWADDELL. Congressman, I was in Monrovia in the fall of 1992 when the city was attacked under the "Operation Octopus" assault. At that time, the ECOMOG forces were thrown into a very perilous and precarious—

Mr. JOHNSTON. Which were mainly Nigerian, weren't they?

Mr. TWADDELL. They were primarily Nigerian. They were about two-thirds at that time and I think they are somewhat more now.

At that time, the Nigerians and the elements of ECOMOG there, agreed that the AFL, which was substantially a Krahn force of the former Doe Government, could be used in selective tasks for the protection of the city and later established a secure corridor down to Burkina. That was a conscious decision. It was a decision made in rather extreme circumstances. That is one example and that was, if you can so characterize it, an institutional decision and action.

It is also clear that individuals in the ECOMOG force sell weapons and ammunition to faction elements. I believe that such behavior is an individual, rather than a systemic and an approved institutional action. But we believe that at various times that has also been a significant source of weapons to various Krahn elements.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Secretary, we are going to have a short recess to go vote and we will come back.

The subcommittee is in recess.

[Recess]

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. The committee will once again come to order.

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador, for your patience in waiting for us to come back.

We had been talking. I know that Mr. Johnson was finishing up his questions. He may have more when he comes back.

Before I recognize Mr. Payne, I wanted to ask you about the arms embargo. You had talked about it in your opening statement and referred to it in answer to our questions.

And what sort of political or economic sanctions would you recommend as part of a campaign to force these governments to abide by and enforce the U.N. arms embargo?

Mr. TWADDELL. Madam Chair, the question of arms flow into Liberia was first addressed by ECOWAS itself in Dakar, I believe in the month of October, 1992. And they called on all of their members, including those directly bordering Liberia, to halt the flow of arms into Liberia.

As Congressman Hastings, and I think Congressman Johnston, might have been intending in a comment, porous borders are not exclusive to West Africa or to that forest region of the continent. We know a little bit about porous borders ourselves and how difficult it is to, with absolute certainty, constrict the flow of people and commodities.

As well as raising it rhetorically, the experience in more recent years of those neighboring ECOWAS countries has been one of self-inflicted or self-permitted pain as they are themselves the territories on which there are more and more incidents of violence. Some of these grow out of the flow of refugees and these ethnic groups that occupy both sides of the borders. But the availability of weapons throughout Liberia and now, as it begins to creep throughout the region, is of obvious great importance to those governments.

Regarding sanctions, I think we need to be very careful in contemplating sanctions and have a couple of things firmly in mind. One is to have some kind of collectivity. Sanctions imposed by one



to see if we can be equitable in an international sense, use that commitment of the West African Governments and other countries to contribute in the broader international community to the effort to bring stability and peace to Liberia. I think that is the objective we have to pursue at the moment.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Ms. Chairman.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Payne.

Mr. Houghton.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, good to see you here, as always. Thank you very much for coming.

I would sort of like to get to a bottom line here. You probably have never heard that expression before, have you? The bottom line?

You know, you say we must bond together with other nations. Just cannot do these things unilaterally, particularly in the area of sanctions. You say that also that you project a feeling of disenchantment once this ECOWAS August meeting takes place. And then you say you are also exploring with European allies other measures which can take place.

I obviously do not ask you to do anything which is secret or confidential. But could you share with us, taking a look, maybe, out to the end of the year, what you see might be happening—the possibility of happening at the end of the year?

Mr. TWADDELL. That is a very murky crystal ball into which to gaze. I do think that the meeting at the beginning of August of the ECOWAS leaders will be a critical one. Our impression at the moment is that Chairman Rawlings, who still has a very influential voice on the formulation and implementation of the group's policy, is inclined to stay the course; to try to reengage the members of the council and state, including those three faction leaders, in an interim government; to move forward, to the extent possible, in disarmament and demobilization; and there is a very strong desire, I think, to have elections.

The timing of elections, realistically, cannot be what was set in the original Abuja Agreement in August, 1995. I think it is generally conceded that that anniversary when elections were supposed to occur this August is unmeetable. The rainy season makes that highly unlikely. The events of the violence make it even more unlikely. But perhaps late in 1996, early 1997.

There is, it seems to me, an abiding argument to be made with these faction leaders. Their efforts to seize power on the part of one or two of them and exclude the others has not succeeded. That has led to 6 years of continuing cycles of violence. At one time, fortunes of one faction may rise; at other times, another. But none of them have been able to grab power, hold onto power, or knock the other principal adversary out of the box. I think that should lead them to seek ways in which there is an exit—their own exit—without defeat. I think it is difficult to use the term "honor" in that company—but survival, perhaps—and bring them to a compromise that would allow them to forego the services of these pathetic juvenile fighters, to actually exert what they have of command and control, and get those fighters disarmed. It will be very important to find

some other employment activity. Some of them should be back in school. But then to get on with the process of election.

The example of Sierra Leone earlier this spring may present a certain kind of a formula—and I am in no position to pre-judge, but I do know that the notion is in circulation in ECOWAS' councils as well—that if there can be a significant establishment of security for the majority of the population, the larger the better, the electorate could go with an election.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Can I just interrupt a minute? I mean, I see the options and am very, very clear on that. The only thing is, I want to know what is going to happen. I mean, here we are now and by December 31, what specifically is going to be different so that we do not, next year, sit around and talk about the same issues and the fact that we have to be in concert with our allies in terms of sanctions and we have to continue to use diplomacy, hoping elections will come out. I mean, what specifically is going to be different at the end of the year?

Mr. TWADDELL. Congressman Houghton, I have been on this one for 4 years and, believe me, I would love to see it end by the beginning of next year.

If we can give ECOWAS and ECOMOG that additional muscle, what ECOMOG has done in Monrovia over the last 4½ weeks has been—

Mr. HOUGHTON. Are we going to be able to do that—give them the—

Mr. TWADDELL. I hope we can move this \$30 million. I hope we can encourage, as my colleagues—

Mr. HOUGHTON. So is it up to us to do it?

Mr. TWADDELL. Well, we are a significant leader in mobilizing those resources for ECOMOG. The Europeans—I believe it was Congressman Johnston said—everyone looks to the United States to take the lead in this.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Right. But, anyway, this is a job—is this right, Madam Chairman—for us to do? We have to do it in the committee and then full committee and then get onto the floor? Is that not? So—

Mr. TWADDELL. What we are talking about in that \$30 million, Congressman, is reprogramming 1996 money. We are trying to lock onto that within the Administration, within the State Department and the Defense Department—

Mr. HOUGHTON. Oh, I see.

Mr. TWADDELL [continuing]. and move that quickly—

Mr. HOUGHTON. Right, right, right.

Mr. TWADDELL [continuing]. into effective support for ECOMOG.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Right, right.

Mr. TWADDELL. As I was about to say, Dane Smith, with that \$30-million commitment that our Administration leaders have made, was just visiting five Western European capitals and those governments are willing to help. So there is not, I would say, a stampede to dump money onto ECOWAS and ECOMOG, but there is some inclination in recognition of the fact that the ECOMOG contributing contingents do need support to assist them in this endeavor.



Tripoli, Qadhafi probably also saw an opportunity to avenge himself on Washington by threatening the security of the cluster of American strategic assets located in Liberia.

A mutual defense pact existed between the United States and Liberia. But the atrocities committed by President Doe's troops in responding to the incursion quite properly ruled out any U.S. military role in defending the government which Doe headed. However, Washington's subsequent decision to disengage from diplomatic efforts to bring the conflict to a negotiated conclusion was an ominous sign. It soon became clear that the United States was going to seriously disappoint Liberians.

Those who thought the special relationship would prompt Washington to make an effort to resolve their conflict, at least as serious as that which Washington had engaged in to solve wars in Namibia, Mozambique and Angola, soon learned they were mistaken. As it became evident that officials in the neighboring Ivory Coast were stoking the fires of civil war by permitting arms and other supplies for Taylor to transit their territory, there were no vigorous American protests. The Ivory Coast was on the Security Council. The United States was not going to jeopardize Ivorian support or American objectives at the United Nations, particularly after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. So the arms continued to flow in.

Soon, Taylor was being allowed to export through the Ivory Coast logs cut from the rainforest in order to earn the money to pay for the arms. The American Government remained mute.

An American flotilla was dispatched to Liberian waters to assist in the evacuation of Americans and foreigners. When the American embassy was threatened, 300 Marines were sent ashore to protect it. But the pleas of Liberians that the Marines remaining at sea be sent into Monrovia to chase the belligerents out of the capital went unheeded. Absent American leadership, the U.N. Security Council took no step to dispatch peacekeepers. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, that responsibility was left to a regional military coalition—a coalition formed by some of the world's poorest States left to finance their peacekeepers without any U.N. support.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Ambassador, if you could wrap it up. Our clock indicates that it has been 5 minutes. We will give you an additional 2 minutes to conclude, if possible.

Mr. BISHOP. Fine.

For the past 6 years, the United States has substituted generous humanitarian assistance for the exercise of the political will necessary to resolve the Liberian conflict. The diplomatic lead, as well as the peacekeeping responsibility, have been left to West Africans. The conflict apparently has not been on the agenda for high-level meetings with the French Government, despite Paris' important and not always helpful role in the Liberian drama.

Hesitation, wishful thinking and bureaucratic gridlock have inhibited American financial support for the peace accords negotiated by West African States. The most recent and promising of these accords was signed last August. American experience in Mozambique, Angola, and in dealing with conflicts far removed from Africa should have made it obvious that substantial funds would have to

be provided for retraining and resettlement programs for the combatants.

The Liberian civil war has been grotesque. The faction leaders are war criminals as reprehensible and deserving of punishment as those indicted by the International War Crimes tribunals. The Liberian people are their victims. They are powerless before the intoxicated boy soldiers conscripted by Taylor, Boley, Krumah and Johnson. It is the Liberian people we have let down.

If we are not willing to use our professional military forces to protect them, at least we should not deny them the protection envisioned by the U.N. Charter which their government signed as a founding member. If we cannot even muster the resolve necessary to do this for our Liberian allies, let us cobble together a policy which combines financial support for the West African peace-keepers with significant programs for retraining and reintegrating the combatants, international monitoring of Liberia's borders to inhibit arms inflows, a ban on exports of Liberian goods from territory controlled by the warlords, and assistance to Liberian civil society so that it has a chance to become the foundation for the eventual construction of a democratic Liberia.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bishop appears in the appendix.]
Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Mr. George.

STATEMENT OF KEVIN GEORGE, PRESIDENT, FRIENDS OF LIBERIA

Mr. GEORGE. Thank you, Madam Chair, for permitting me to testify today and also my regards to Representative Houghton and Congressman Payne.

I would like to, in my testimony today, briefly relay some of the information I have about the situation in Liberia and then also to suggest a new initiative, a fresh initiative, that the U.S. Government can take to bring lasting peace to Liberia.

I spoke this weekend with a Liberian businessman who was once a civil servant and advisor to one of the civilian members of the Council of State. His name is Joe Bokai. And Joe told me that the situation in Monrovia is one of anarchy. The ECOMOG peacekeeping forces have restored some security to the city, but only on the main streets—the main gridlock of streets in the city. If you venture off those streets and you run into the armed gangs that are still roving the city, then anything can happen to you.

The city has no basic services. No electricity, no water, very little health care. Food is expensive and it is hard to come by. Gasoline is practically non-existent. When you can find it, it runs about six U.S. dollars a gallon—way too much for any Liberian to afford in the way of public transportation.

Joe's house was looted. He walked 12 miles from Paynesville, a suburb of Monrovia, to where he and his family now stay out of what is called Bushrod Island—a relatively safe area of town. Along the way, he and his family were stopped twice by armed gangs. His two boys were with him and when the armed gangs threatened to take his children away and execute them because they thought that they belonged to opposing factions, Joe and his



fairs, key African leaders are doing as much. "Their approach recognized Nigeria's political realities but refused to accept them as immutable."

And reconsider your relations with Nigeria as they impact the Liberian peace process because it is difficult to imagine in the present international circumstances a complete replacement of ECOMOG. I think it would be highly problematic.

What should be happening instead of the attempts that seem now to be made to ignore the reality of a Nigeria—instead of that, I think what we should be doing at the global level is the United States and the contact group should be, this time, providing ECOMOG not only with the wherewithal to fulfill a clearer mandate, arrived at through consultation at the three levels that I mentioned earlier on, but sustaining this effort by advancing disarmament in the socioeconomic framework suggested earlier.

But none of this, Madam Chair, is likely to advance the peace process if the critical leadership factor at the three levels remain as they are now—confused, defused or non-existent. This is why I believe that a critical leadership role for the United States cannot be overemphasized.

Why is this so? Because the ingredients are absent for such a leadership to emerge at the Liberian national level; because the material resources are meager at the regional level; because, finally, I think, it is in the national interest of the United States to lead because West African regional stability means American legitimate business opportunities and Liberia is in West Africa. The United States cannot afford to withdraw from an Africa at the cutting edge of some of the major emergent issues on the post-cold war agenda. And there is, finally, a near universal perception that the ties of history between the United States and Liberia impose on the former a special responsibility.

Finally, Madam Chair, the challenge for all involved in the search for peace in Liberia is to find a way to effect interaction of the three levels of responsibility—again, I repeat them to be the national level, the regional level, and the global—determining the critical leadership role; determining the possibilities for political will to act.

Thank you.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Thank you, Dr. Dunn, and thank you to all of our witnesses.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Dunn appears in the appendix.]

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. I would like to ask you a question and all of you may respond, or one of you, if you would like.

We have been talking about countries that have been helping the Liberian warlords maintain this cruel control over their people—Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso. I would like to ask you what kind of sanctions do you think that should, could or should not be imposed on these countries, such as visa restrictions, suspension of foreign aid programs, the policy of voting against them in international financial institutions. There are a myriad of tools that one can use through diplomatic means and through appropriation programs and would these be sufficient to convince these governments to stop aiding the warlords?

I mean, if you do not want those suggestions, what kind of recommendations do you make for the United States to undertake to have these governments help us and, in turn, help the Liberian people?

Mr. BISHOP. If I may speak first, Madam Chairman—

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Ambassador.

Mr. BISHOP [continuing]. I like your entire list and would like to see all of those measures taken.

I must take exception to remarks made earlier about the government of the Ivory Coast informing American interlocutors that at a national level of the government it is opposed to this activity taking place. That it is only taking place at the local level as a result of bribery. We have been hearing that since 1990. It does not hold water.

The city of Danane on Liberia's border is awash with BMWs and Mercedes Benzes owned by diamond dealers and arms merchants who are there exchanging the diamonds for the arms. The Ivorian Government knows perfectly well what is taking place and if it wanted to stop it, it could. I also would support the recommendation that monitors be placed along the border to try to control that illicit traffic.

Mr. GEORGE. I am certainly in favor of sanctions and other measures that would stop the flow of resources out of Liberia and those resources get turned around and are used to kill Liberians. But I do not think that is going to make a significant dent or a significant impression on the peace process.

As Ambassador Twaddell pointed out, the borders are very porous. Diamonds are easy to export and easy to sell. I believe the biggest thing, the single most important thing that has to take place, is a restoration of security in Liberia and that cannot be done unless there is a sizable peacekeeping force there that can also be deployed along the borders to interdict the flow of resources.

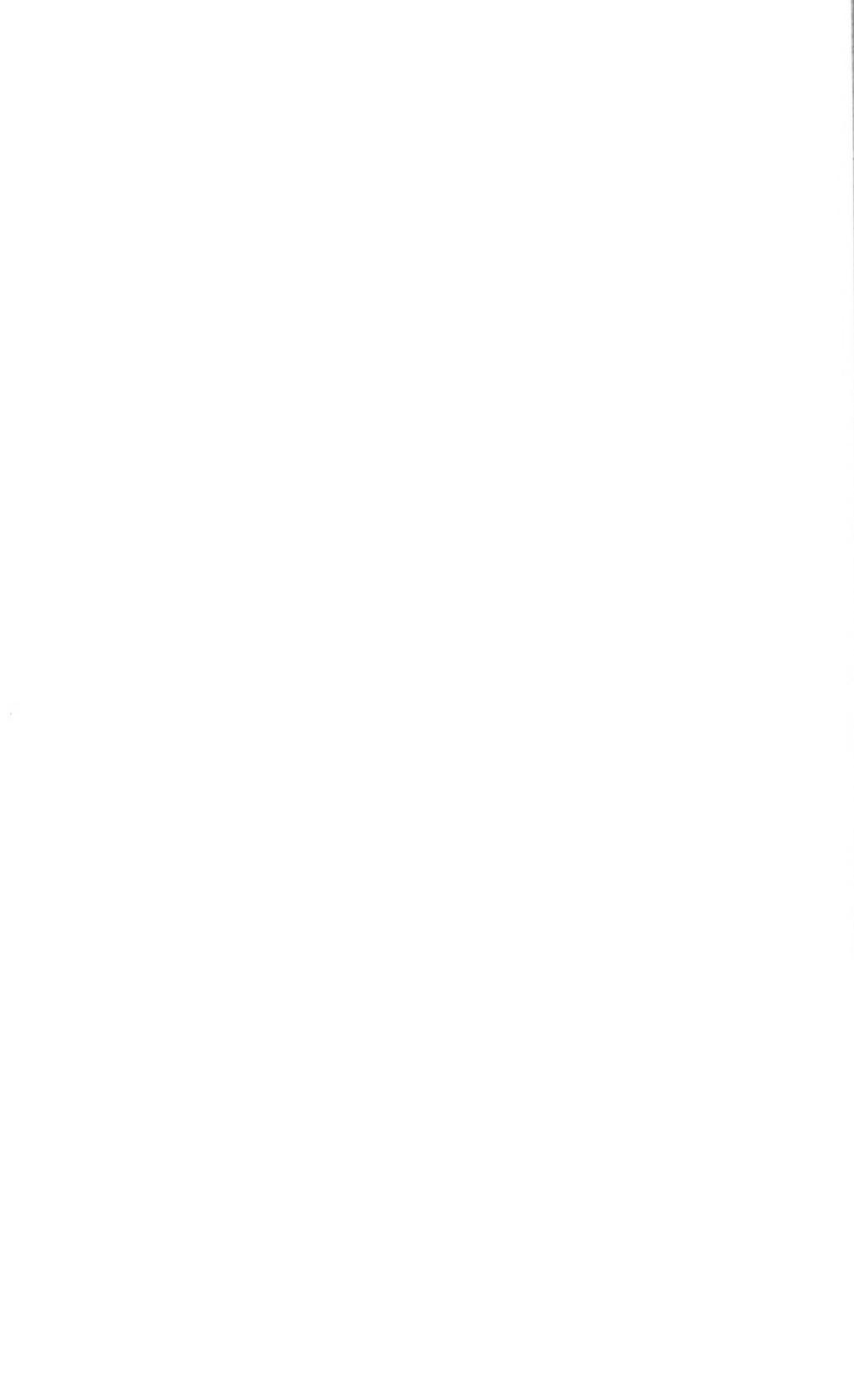
Dr. DUNN. I am not opposed to the idea of sanctions, but I think that what we need to do is first to put someone in charge of the entire peace process. And I think if there is the clear message that the political will has been marshalled in order to address, once and for all, this Liberian problem, there are all kinds of diplomatic methods that can be, I think, utilized to put additional pressure—even before we reach the stage of sanctions—on some of these countries that are in violation at this time.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Mr. Payne.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Let me ask, do you think that, once again, that ECOMOG can put itself together to continue the work that it has been trying to do for 5 years, or do you think that the United Nations should attempt to be convinced that either by them taking over the leadership or by the attempt to integrate other troops from other parts, maybe, of West Africa, if that would be a way to go? Do you feel that the credibility of ECOMOG has been lost and do you feel that they could possibly be reconvened, regrouped, to a credible force? Any—all three, if you want.



in what we have with the Abuja arrangement. But I think it was weighted too heavily in favor of the warlords and I think the time has come to revisit that and give the Liberian people, in effect, an opportunity to make some determination as to what form interim governance should take, or the composition, if you will, of that interim government arrangement.

Mr. PAYNE. Let me just conclude. I think my time has probably expired. But I would just like to commend Ambassador Bishop for your very thorough and strong statement regarding the role that the United States should have played. I agree with you wholeheartedly. I think that we were derelict in our responsibility when this first occurred. I think we could have avoided a lot of this pain and bloodshed if, at that time, the Administration would have taken some more aggressive positions—and, like I said, I commend you for your reciting of the history that we all know—at least the people here know. And if any country in Africa should have had strong support by virtue of its origin, it should have been support for Liberia saying that it is under ECOMOG and under Western Africa all of a sudden, I think, was a dramatic change and that it was unfortunate that that decision was made at that time, in my opinion, too.

Mr. BISHOP. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Payne.

Mr. Houghton.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

If I understand it, there are four action steps: One is to have a conference; two is to give more money to ECOMOG; three is to have a U.N. peacekeeping force; and the fourth is to involve our own troops. Maybe there is another one, too, that I have missed.

Now, gentlemen, what is the single most important, do you think, of these four, or any other things, that you think ought to be done right now?

Maybe, Mr. Ambassador, you could start.

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Congressman, in an ideal world, I would like to see American troops engaged. But I know that is not going to happen and I know that the United Nations is not going to put forward a peacekeeping force unless this Administration proposes it, and they have seriously considered that option and rejected it. So that leaves us with support for ECOMOG with the possibility that the United States might play a more direct role in that support than they have been willing to in the past.

Mr. HOUGHTON. So you are saying that if you had your druthers, forgetting about our own troops for a moment, that you would suggest we put more money into the United Nations, urge that, because of the peacekeeping force costs and urge that approach. Short of that, we would go the ECOMOG route.

Mr. BISHOP. That is right. I do not see why our most intimate friends in Africa should be shortchanged by the United States in their hour of extreme need. Why support a peacekeeping force for Angola, for Mozambique, for Namibia—countries with which we have no historic connection—and refuse to do the same for a country that was founded by Americans?

Mr. HOUGHTON. Sure.

Would it be possible to ask somebody from the State Department to answer a question? I do not know if there is anybody here who wants to do this.

What was the reason for the decision not to put more money into the U.N. approach, backing away from that?

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. We have two individuals from the State Department, if you could help with that.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Yes. I mean, you do not have to answer if you do not want to.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. And identify yourself for the record.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Yes.

Ms. MANN. Janean Mann. I am from the Office of Congressional Liaison.

Mr. Houghton, right now we have a problem with our arrearages to the U.N. peacekeeping operations. I think it would be very difficult for us to convince the United Nations to undertake yet another peacekeeping operation given the substantial arrearages that we have already. U.N. peacekeeping operations are in rather dire financial—

Mr. HOUGHTON. So, if I understand it correctly, that if we were to pay up on our arrearages—and there is a whole sort of entanglement process going on there—that you would propose we do something here.

Am I putting words in your mouth?

Ms. MANN. Yes. We certainly considered this, but one of the big things inhibiting it, obviously, was the problem with the financing in the United Nations, that they would probably—

Mr. HOUGHTON. Fine.

Now, so let's just assume for a moment we did pay up on our arrearages. Is there a particular State Department approach here to resolving this issue? Actually, United Nations?

Ms. MANN. I think it is the position that Mr. Twaddell outlined.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. What we could do, Congressman Houghton, why do not we schedule a meeting in your office with the folks from the Department of State who might be more comfortable in giving you a fuller answer to that at that time?

Mr. HOUGHTON. That is fine. Whatever is necessary.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. If the State Department officials would note that and please get back to Mr. Houghton.

If we could do that tomorrow, that would be fine.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Sure.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. HOUGHTON. OK.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Go ahead, Mr. George.

Mr. GEORGE. We do not seem to have a problem finding the funds for Bosnia. We did not seem to have a problem finding the funds for other African countries that were going through crises. Suddenly, it is a problem with Liberia and—

Mr. HOUGHTON. But forget about the problem. What is the solution?

Mr. GEORGE. The solution, I believe, is to use some creative thinking, perhaps. If we are convinced that the ECOMOG process, peacekeeping force, is not going to work, then we should attack the problem through the United Nations and possibly establish some

sort of alternative to passing the money through the regular U.N. channels; establishment of some other form of multinational trust fund.

Mr. HOUGHTON. So you are saying your No. 1 solution would be do it through the United Nations.

Mr. GEORGE. I would like to see that and I would like to see—but the three components.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Well, that is fine.

Mr. GEORGE. Ghana and I would like to see United Nations and United States take the lead in the formation of a multinational peacekeeping force.

Mr. HOUGHTON. All right. Thank you very much.

Mr. GEORGE. That would be my top priority.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you very much.

Doctor.

Dr. DUNN. Yes.

Congressman, I would like to use the word "bottom line" that you mentioned earlier on here. I think, really, here we need to come to the question of bottom line. For me, it is called leadership. Somebody has to take charge of this peace process in Liberia or we will be here year after year after year. And I am suggesting that, given the nature of the relationship between the United States and Liberia, it is the United States that should take charge. I am not saying anything about American troops or America going to the United Nations. I am simply saying that the leadership must be very clearly spelled out. In other words, the United States should say very clearly that it is prepared to take the leadership with this problem until it is solved and take the measures that are necessary in collaboration with the region and Liberians; only then do I think we are going to go forward.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Sure.

Dr. DUNN. And this is why I mentioned that question of the national conference. I mean, this is the only way that you are going to have a significant, or call it even a legitimate, Liberian input if you took that route.

Mr. HOUGHTON. Thank you very much.

Chairperson ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. We thank our witnesses for being here today and we thank the State Department as well. We look forward to monitoring this situation and Mr. Houghton will make sure that we get back to you on that situation about the United Nations, et cetera.

Thank you so much and the subcommittee is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:24 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

Chairman Gilman
Liberia Hearing
June 26, 1996

Thank you Madam Chair. Let me commend you for holding this hearing on the very troubled country of Liberia. The tragedy that Liberia has endured over the past few years, particularly recently, has touched all of us.

It is very easy for us to look back over the past few years and assign blame for current conditions in Liberia. The United States, other Western nations and neighboring West African states are not without fault.

It is far more difficult, however, to find a lasting solution to the chaos in Liberia. We owe a great deal of gratitude to Ambassador Twadell, who served as our envoy to Liberia with great distinction and who is our first witness today, and all the other Americans who have devoted years of effort in the cause of peace.

Nevertheless, Madam Chair, we must be brutally honest. Bloodthirsty warlords now rule Liberia. But Liberia's neighbors are established nations with strong ties to

Europe and recipients of large amounts of development assistance. These neighbors have not always played a constructive role in Liberia.

If Liberia's neighbors are found to be profiting from Liberia's tragedy, we should not be afraid of condemning it, and doing something about it.

Madam Chair, again, let me thank you for holding this very important hearing. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses.

TESTIMONY BY WILLIAM H. TWADDELL
ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS
HEARING ON LIBERIA
BEFORE THE HOUSE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
June 26, 1996

Madame Chairman, Members of the Committee, Good afternoon. I am pleased to report that the situation in Liberia has improved since Assistant Secretary Moose met with you in early May. The city of Monrovia has been relatively calm for one month. Some fighters of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and of Alhaji Kromah's United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO-K) have left the city or observe the "no guns on the streets" dictum of The West African Peacekeeping Force, ECOMOG. The standoff at the Barclay Training Center has been resolved with the fighters of Roosevelt Johnson's ULIMO-J having left the center unarmed. ECOMOG is deployed throughout the city and is seizing arms caches and exerting its authority to keep the peace. A large majority of those made homeless by the fighting have returned to their homes, although many whose homes were destroyed remain in displaced persons centers, including about 4,500 persons in the Embassy's Greystone Compound. Some Liberians and others have sought ways to leave Liberia including on boats. There is still augmented security at the Embassy, but evacuation flights have virtually ceased with the resumption of commercial air traffic into Monrovia on June 17.

Current Situation

The United States Government is energetically pursuing the opportunity provided by relative restoration of calm in Monrovia to push for resumption of the peace process. Our strategy remains consistent with what we described to you in May. Its core elements include: increased support for ECOMOG; enhanced diplomatic efforts aimed at encouraging maintenance of the cease-fire and restoration of the Abuja peace process; and stepped-up pressure on the faction leaders to cooperate. As Secretary Moose said in May, we believe the Abuja Accord, which provides for an interim government, disarmament, demobilization, and the holding of free and fair elections, continues to be the best framework for a permanent solution. ECOMOG remains key to achieving this goal. The early August Summit of the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) will be critical when the West African leaders measure the progress toward reestablishing the peace process and take decisions regarding their continued involvement.

At this moment, Special Presidential Envoy for Liberia, Ambassador Dane Smith is in the region. Last week he consulted with European Governments, to explore how we, in conjunction with our allies, can best work with the countries of the region to strengthen ECOMOG. Ambassador Smith is also exploring ways we can work with others to keep pressure on the faction leaders to participate in good faith in the peace process. We are convinced that the faction leaders must be made to see their interests best served by the reestablishment of a functioning national government and the disarmament and demobilization of fighters.

The last point, keeping pressure on faction leaders, is closely related to the timely topic we are here to discuss today. The ability of the faction leaders to find collaborators in the international community to whom to sell illicit Liberian commodities to provide the wherewithall to arms merchants to procure and deliver weapons and munitions, is at the core of the tragedy of this seemingly endless conflict. Breaking this vicious cycle is critical to ending the war.

The Arms Trade

A steady flow of arms and munitions to Liberia's warring factions has kept the Liberian conflict going for over six years. Our information about this trade is sketchy and full of gaps but does lead to some conclusions. Almost all weapons currently reaching Liberia transit countries in the region rather than arrive directly in Liberia. Which country, depends on which faction is the intended recipient. Arms reaching Charles Taylor's NPFL most likely transit Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. Those destined for Alhaji Kromah's ULIMO-K are likely to pass through Guinea. Some of the Krahn factions have in the past received weapons from Nigeria via Nigerian troops in ECOMOG.

Illicit cross-border trade in Africa is not uncommon because of porous borders. The extent to which arms transfers to Liberia reflect conscious national government policy of the countries is difficult to gauge. Clearly, corrupt local or national government officials and ethnic sympathies make it possible for such transfers to continue even in the face of official policy expressly forbidding them.

Most of the arms and ammunition reaching Liberian factions are purchased on the gray market through private dealers in various countries, primarily in Europe. The NPFL, ULIMO-K, and the LPC have been the primary recipients of illicit arms shipments.

The international community has long discussed the critical importance of ending arms flows to the Liberian factions. A 1992 ECOWAS declaration called on all nations to stop arms transfers and restrict commercial activity with Liberia. Later that year, the United Nations Security Council imposed an international arms embargo on Liberia. When the United Nations agreed to send an observer mission to Liberia (UNOMIL), the mandate included responsibility for monitoring cross-border trade in an attempt to end illicit arms transfers. UNOMIL troops were deployed on the borders until fighting in September/October 1994 forced them to withdraw to Monrovia.

Revenue Sources

The steady supply of arms -- none of the factions keeps large inventories -- depends on a steady supply of money. The primary source of funds appears to be from the sale of commodities from Liberia's trove of natural resources, principally diamonds, timber, gold, and rubber. At present, Taylor and his current ally Alhaji Kromah control the most of the areas where these commodities are found, namely across the northern tier of the country and along the border with Cote d'Ivoire. Kromah's rival, ULIMO-J had access to some diamond areas before being pushed out of Tubmanburg. A Florida political science professor, William Reno, wrote recently: "The war has been as much a battle over commerce inside and beyond Liberia's borders as it has been a war for territory or control of the government."

Publicly available trade statistics suggest the magnitude of revenue available to Liberia's faction leaders from commodity sales. From 1990 to 1994 Liberia's diamond exports averaged \$300 million annually. During the same period, timber exports averaged \$53 million annually, rubber exports, \$27 million annually, and gold exports close to one million dollars annually. Iron ore exported from 1990 to 1993 (none was taken out in 1994) averaged almost \$41 million annually. Even taking into account the inevitable smuggling of some of these commodities, especially diamonds, discounts for trafficking in illegal products, and bribes for officials in countries these products transit, the sums of money available to faction leaders are still substantial. Charles Taylor who has long controlled the most lucrative areas of the countryside, could have upwards of \$75 million a year passing through his hands.

Just as most of the arms entering Liberia transit neighboring countries, so the commodities whose profits pay for the arms transit neighboring countries en route to their final destinations. To a large extent, those destinations are in Europe. Trade records indicate that most Liberian-origin diamonds probably find their way to Belgium. Buyers in France and Malaysia are the primary customers for Liberian timber.

Another source of funds, notably since the Abuja Accord of August 1995 brought the faction leaders into the ruling Council of State, has been revenues from Liberia's maritime registry, which constitute ninety percent of the Liberian Government's legitimate revenue. Following disbursement to the Government last fall of ship registry revenue, there was a notable rise in foreign travel by Liberian faction leaders, especially those on the Council of State and their supporters, who travel with large entourages. Ship registry revenues are about \$16-20 million annually.

Business Deals and the United States

Although the United States is not believed to be a major source of arms for Liberia or a principal recipient of illicit Liberian commodities, it is fertile ground for activities that have contributed significantly to the coffers of Liberian faction leaders and have certainly helped prolong the war. Most of the Liberian faction leaders and their associates have spent many years in the U.S., often as students, temporary workers, even as permanent residents. They own property, own or operate businesses, and, more importantly, they know how the U.S. system works and how to make it work for them.

Their activities fall into five major categories: direct fundraising, investments, U.S. bank accounts, scams, and the sale of raw materials. The following examples are indicative:

- New Horizons, a group based in Providence, R.I., aggressively solicited funds for several years through a sophisticated newsletter and direct appeals via radio talk shows and personal appearances at Liberian-American events. In 1994, New Horizons raised over \$2 million, some of which was used to finance the coup attempt of former Doe Lt. Gen. Julue in September 1994. The group, which used to confine its activities to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, conducted major fundraising efforts in 1995 in California and Texas.
- Charles Taylor either owns or controls a tree service company in Maryland, a legitimate business which reportedly won a contract to provide all landscaping services to the City of Baltimore, thereby generating \$2 million monthly to the business.
- When negotiations seemed headed toward peace about a year ago, numerous wealthy businessmen in the U.S. reported contacts from certain Liberians and unsuspecting U.S. church leaders asking them to contribute to a dubious fund to rebuild Liberia. Monies contributed later disappeared. Another scam offered commodity concessions or monopoly business opportunities in gold or diamonds in post-war

Liberia at extremely favorable terms. We do not know how many hundreds of thousands of dollars may have been collected in these appeals.

Conclusion

All of this adds up to a grim picture: warlords wantonly exploiting their country's resources to keep themselves and their rag-tag forces in weapons with virtual international impunity and, in some cases, complicity.

The Administration is keenly interested in putting an end to the United States serving as a source of weapons or funds for faction leaders. However, curbing the generation and expatriation of funds, even when it is highly probable that they are fueling the Liberian war, is difficult as long as those involved comply with U.S. law. Fund-raising activities are not restricted and funds are easily spirited out of the country. Evidence of arms purchases in the United States, money-laundering, transportation of stolen merchandise, non-payment of taxes, or non-compliance with asset reporting requirements are easier to combat. But arms are not generally being purchased in the United States and most of the lucrative commodity trade is directed elsewhere. Even were commodities entering the United States, consider how difficult it would be to prove Liberian origin of timber, for example.

Nevertheless, we continue to seek ways to constrict these activities. As Ambassador Moose announced in May, the United States reimposed visa restrictions on the faction leaders and their close associates for impeding the peace process by renewing fighting in Monrovia in April. Discussions with European Union members have resulted in many of them agreeing to follow suit. We are also exploring with our European allies the extent to which other measures might be imposed collectively on Liberian faction leaders if they fail to cooperate with restoration of the peace process.

The U.S. Government firmly believes it is in the interest of all the people of Liberia to end exploitation of Liberia's riches for illicit benefit of a few to the detriment of the majority. With its rich natural resource base, Liberia has the potential to be a wealthy country. Not only is the plunder of Liberia's resources contributing to a continuation of warfare, it is depriving the people of Liberia and future generations of their rightful inheritance. We believe it is incumbent on all countries to ensure that the UN Arms Embargo against Liberia is not violated within its territory. We have called on its neighboring countries to adhere strictly to the UN arms embargo and several UN Security Council resolutions on Liberia have urged the international community as a whole to do the same.

- 6 -

We have and will continue to urge countries aware of violations to bring them to the attention of the UN Sanctions committee; only then is the UN obliged to investigate allegations. Both aspects should be tackled equally aggressively: the illicit commodity sales that provide the warlords' wherewithal, and the mechanisms of arms purchase and delivery. States or individuals engaging in or turning a blind eye to either are perpetuating Liberia's tragic war and should have to answer for their acts before national and international laws.

Thank you.

Testimony of William H. Twaddell - Annotation

Charles Taylor Tree Service

Liberia and Nigerian publications have printed stories in 1995-96 charging that Mr. Charles Taylor and his close faction associates have investments abroad, including in the United States, from which they derive income. One such charge in the May 8, 1995 edition of the Monrovia Daily News alleged "... Mr. Charles Taylor either owns or operates a tree service company, by that name in Maryland, a legitimate business". An article in the Baltimore Sun of July 6 makes the case of apparent mistaken identity in this instance.

STATEMENT BY JAMES K. BISHOP

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

JUNE 26, 1996

STATEMENT BY JAMES K. BISHOP

Madame Chairwoman:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today. The plight of the Liberian people has received too little attention in Washington. The Committee's initiative is most welcome by those who want to see the U.S. government act more vigorously to assist the Liberian people in their hour of extreme need.

It is not necessary to remind members of this Committee that Liberia was established as a nation by Americans freed from slavery in this country. The special relationship between the two countries dates from the time of American settlement one hundred and seventy-five years ago. Given the disparity in size and wealth it is not surprising that Liberians have set greater store in this relationship than have Americans. But it is disappointing that the United States government, which was able to take Liberia's support for granted when American security was threatened, has responded so hesitantly to the desperate pleas of Liberians caught up in a conflict brought on it part by their friendship for the United States.

During two world wars which presented little threat to their national interests Liberians formally allied themselves with the United States. In the latter conflict rubber from Liberia was among the critical inputs enabling America to become the arsenal of democracy. Airfields and port facilities the U.S. military were permitted to construct on Liberian soil became stepping stones for the supply of allied forces fighting the Nazis in North Africa and Europe.

With the onset of the Cold War Liberians again put their security at risk to assist the United States. Permission was given to build extensive communications, navigation and information installations which almost certainly put Liberia on our global adversary's target list. Unrestricted U.S. military access to the country's international airport facilitated resupply of forces sympathetic to the United States in the proxy wars waged in Africa between the United States and its adversaries. Diplomatically the Liberians joined the United States in contesting the efforts of the Soviets and their allies to extend their influence throughout newly independent Africa. Whether it was recognizing Israel or expelling the Libyans, the United States could count on Liberia for consistent support.

The conflict which has transformed more than half of Liberia's population into refugees or internally displaced persons while killing over 150,000 of their number began as a Libyan backed incursion. Charles Taylor's forces received arms and training from both the Libyans and Libyan surrogates in Burkina Faso. This targeting by the Libyan government was intended, I believe, as revenge for Liberia's outspoken opposition to Libyan aggression and subversion in Africa. Still smarting from the U.S. Air Force raid on Tripoli, Qadhafi probably also saw an opportunity to avenge himself on Washington by threatening the security of the cluster of American strategic assets located in Liberia.

Despite a mutual defense pact the atrocities committed by President Doe's troops as they responded to the incursion quite properly ruled out any U.S. military role defending the Liberian government Doe headed. But Washington's decision to disengage from diplomatic efforts to bring the conflict to a negotiated conclusion was an ominous sign. It soon became clear that the United States was going to seriously disappoint those Liberians who thought the special relationship would prompt Washington to make an effort to resolve their conflict at least as serious as that which Washington had engaged in to solve civil wars in African countries in which the United States had no historic interests.

As it became increasingly clear that the officials of the neighboring Ivory Coast was stoking the fires of civil war by permitting arms and other supplies for Taylor to transit their territory, there were no vigorous American protests. The Ivory Coast was on the Security Council and the U.S. was not going to jeopardize Ivorian support for American objectives at the UN, particularly after Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. So the arms continued to flow in. Soon Taylor was being allowed to export logs cut from the rain forest to earn the money to pay for the arms. The American government remained mute.

An American naval flotilla was dispatched to Liberian waters to assist in the evacuation of Americans and foreigners. When the American embassy was threatened a few hundred Marines were sent ashore. But the pleas of Liberians that the Marines remaining on board be sent into Monrovia to chase the belligerents out of the capital before they destroyed it went unheeded. Absent American leadership the United Nations Security Council took no step to dispatch peacekeepers. For the first time in the history of the United Nations that responsibility was left to a regional military coalition, a coalition formed by some of the world's poorest states, left to finance their peacekeepers without any United Nations support.

For the past six years the United States has substituted humanitarian assistance for the exercise of the political will necessary to resolve the Liberian conflict. It apparently has not been on the agenda for high level meetings with the French government. Paris' long-standing antipathy to Nigerian leadership aspirations in West Africa has made it an important and not always helpful actor in the Liberian drama. Hesitation, wishful thinking and bureaucratic gridlock have inhibited American financial support for the peace accords negotiated by West African states. The most recent and promising of these was signed last August. Although American experience in Mozambique, Angola and in dealing with conflicts far removed from Africa should have made it obvious that substantial funds would have to be provided for retraining and resettlement programs for combatants, none had been set up when the war resumed in April. Half of the meager \$

10 million earmarked by the U.S. to support a peacekeeping force on which the West Africans have expended hundreds of millions of dollars still had not been committed by April.

The Liberian civil war has been grotesque. The faction leaders are war criminals as reprehensible and deserving of punishment as those indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunals. The Liberian people are their victims. They are powerless before the intoxicated boy soldier conscripted by Taylor, Boley, Krumah and Johnson. It is the Liberian people we have let down. If we are not willing to use our professional military forces to protect them, at least we should not deny them the protection envisioned by the United Nations Charter their government signed as a founding member. If we cannot even muster the resolve necessary to do this for our Liberian allies, let us cobble together a policy which combines financial support for the West African peacekeepers with significant programs for retraining and reintegrating the combatants, international monitoring of Liberia's borders to inhibit arms inflows, a ban on imports of Liberian goods from territory controlled by the warlords, and assistance to Liberian civil society, so that it has a chance to become the foundation for the eventual construction of a democratic Liberia.

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman.



Friends of Liberia

Testimony

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United States Policy and Liberia

The Urgent Need for a New and Effective Peace Initiative

*Written Testimony
of
Kevin George, President
Friends of Liberia*

before the

*House of Representatives
Committee on International Relations
Subcommittee on Africa*

June 26, 1996

Written testimony of:

**Kevin George, President
Friends of Liberia**

Thank you Madam Chairwoman and members of the Subcommittee for the opportunity to share my views on the situation in Liberia. I testify today in my capacity as president of Friends of Liberia (FOL).

FOL has dedicated itself for ten years to helping Liberians achieve peace and democracy. Our eight-hundred members include returned Peace Corps volunteers, Foreign Service officers, missionaries, development workers, expatriate Liberians, academics and others who care deeply about the welfare of the people of Liberia. During Liberia's civil war, we have conducted fact-finding missions, provided medical assistance, brought faction leaders together in public forums and conflict resolution workshops, and advocated for effective U.S. government policies.

I have visited Liberia on four occasions over the course of this war, follow events in the country on a daily basis and meet frequently with visiting Liberian government and civic leaders. In the latest surge of fighting, a half-dozen FOL members working with relief agencies in Liberia were forced to evacuate. One of them, Jeanette Carter, is back in Monrovia assisting the United Nations in the development of new strategies to provide desperately needed emergency relief. FOL's Communities Nurturing Children Project, which was helping two Liberian towns establish reconstruction programs focusing on the needs of their children, was forced to suspend activities when the security situation deteriorated. Our Liberian project coordinator was forced to flee overland with his family to Ivory Coast.

FOL officers constantly evaluate the situation in Liberia. We have all lived and worked in the country and, through our daily contact with Liberians, warring faction leaders, mediators and diplomats, have the ability to accurately assess the state of the peace process. In March of this year, alarmed by the weaknesses in the Abuja peace accord, we outlined them in a report that made reasonable recommendations on how to avert the breakdown of the process. Unfortunately, April brought the realization of our worst fears, when a politically tense Monrovia, fueled by an infusion of guns and partisans, became a battlefield. I have attached a copy of that report entitled *Liberia: Placing the Peace Process Back On Track (March 16, 1996)*, for your review.

In May, FOL joined in a statement with thirteen other international non-governmental organizations to recommend that the United States take the lead in organizing a multi-national force authorized by the United Nations to restore Monrovia and its environs as a safe haven for the estimated one million people who have congregated there. A copy of that statement is attached.

The objectives of my testimony today are to briefly relay information about the current political and humanitarian situation, identify the flaws in the peace process, and to urge a fresh new policy initiative to avoid prolonging the conflict and achieve durable peace.

The Current Political and Humanitarian Situation in Liberia

The members of the Subcommittee are well informed by U.S. government reports on the humanitarian situation in Liberia. The numbers of casualties, displaced persons and property damage in the last two violent months are startling in themselves. But they cannot convey the true horror for Liberian civilians.

I would like to describe the situation in Liberia through the eyes of a Joseph Bokai, a Liberian who I spoke with by telephone this week. Mr. Bokai is a Liberian businessman who has served in the past as a civil servant. Most recently, he was advisor on election matters to Chief Tamba Taylor, one of the civilian members of the Council of State. This makes Joseph atypical, but his dreams of a peaceful and democratic Liberia are typical of the majority of Liberians.

Joseph described the situation in Monrovia this week as "anarchy." ECOMOG peacekeepers have only secured the main streets of Monrovia. If you go off the main grid of streets, to quote Joseph, "anything can happen to you if you happen to run into the armed groups that still move around Monrovia." While five out of the six members of Liberia's Council of State have returned to Monrovia, there has been absolutely no effort made by that government to begin addressing the critical problems facing Liberians.

Basic services such as electricity and water remain non-existent. Food is scarce and when available is extremely expensive. Clean water is difficult to find. Gasoline costs 400 Liberian dollars per gallon. Banks have not reopened. What little public transportation is available is too expensive. The humanitarian situation outside of Monrovia is even worse. Fighting continues in the Southeast and to the west of Monrovia. The flood of internally displaced Liberians continues into the capital. In parts of Liberia, those who have remained in place have been without access to emergency food and medical assistance for over a year.

In the markets all that you find, said Joseph, is looted goods. Joseph's car was taken by armed gunmen of one faction and everything at his house was carried away by members of another faction. He related how strange it is to go to the market and recognize your property and how galling to have to buy it back. Joseph felt fortunate to be able to buy back the power generator for his home. When he found his car at a camp of a minority faction, he was relieved that it had not been looted by the state council's designated "government troops" of the NPFL and ULIMO-K. If these "government troops" had taken my car, said Joe, "I would have never gotten it back. It would have been taken to Ivory Coast to be sold along with vehicles owned by relief agencies and everything else of value that was looted by the 'government' troops."

The Bokai family, like every Liberian in the country, has been through an earthly version of hell since the fighting surged in Monrovia on April 6. But for the first several weeks, the Bokai family felt safe in their neighborhood of Paynesville, about twelve miles from the center of the capital. Then in late April, as the city center was picked clean by looters, the violence expanded to Paynesville. Combatants began roaming the neighborhood making demands. First the car was taken, then combatants informed Joe that his house would be looted and he better get out before something worse happened to his family. The threat was serious. By this time, reports of women being raped and children stolen from parents to become combatants were commonplace. Joe and his wife decided to walk the twelve miles to Bushrod Island, near the ECOMOG base at the Port of Monrovia. Joseph guided 26 people staying in his house on this treacherous trip across town in a river of tens of thousands of Monrovians heading west. Along the way, Joseph and his family were stopped frequently by armed groups who would search their persons and eventually take from them

anything of value. Twice Joseph and his wife had to plead with gunman not to execute their two sons, age 16 and 18, who the combatants accused of being from an opposing faction.

A full day of walking brought them to a battery factory at the port, which they shared with hundreds of others. When fighting broke out in that area, they moved closer to the ECOMOG base and slept for weeks on the floor of an abandoned school building.

Joseph recalled Monrovians looking toward the once prosperous downtown Monrovia and listening to the gunfire and watching as flames reduced another building to ashes. They also could look out to the ocean and see the silhouettes of the U.S. naval flotilla that had arrived in April with 2,000 Marines. That naval skyline gave them hope, Joseph Bokai said, "that we had not been forgotten and that our friend, the United States, would help bring peace back to our country....that kept many of us from fleeing."

I offered not to name Joseph Bokai in my testimony so as not to expose him to any sort of retaliation at home. Fax machines relay even our discourse here to Monrovia within hours. His reply was: "You must use my name." He added, "The civilians are tired of war and warring factions that do not care how we suffer. We are not afraid to let them know that we want peace."

I have used Joseph's name with trepidation. Just several weeks ago, Mr. George Weah, 1996 international soccer player of the year and the star striker of the Milan football team, dared to give an interview to the New York Times in which he stated his disdain for the warring factions. Within days of its publication, Mr. Weah's home in Monrovia was doused with gasoline and set on fire. Two of his teenage cousins were raped. This is the price of speech in Liberia today.

Joseph Bokai is luckier than many other Liberians. He and his family are still alive. In recent weeks, the bodies of more than 500 Liberians have been unearthed from shallow graves around the capital for burial. Many were just in the wrong place, a trusted safe haven, at the wrong time.

Liberians Want Peace and Democracy

Joseph Bokai and soccer-star George Weah are not anomalies. The unarmed civilians of Monrovia and elsewhere have taken every opportunity over the past six years of war to demonstrate their desire for peace. These efforts have ranged from a massive stay-at-home strike in February to a month-long civilian-organized National Peace Conference in 1994. Tens of thousands have marched for peace in the streets of Monrovia. When warring factions returned from one peace conference without an agreement that civilians could support, thousands of Liberians rushed to the airport to force factions leaders back on board planes to return to the negotiating table.

In April, several young Liberians living in the United States, desperate to do something for the sake of peace, organized two rallies for peace. In May, thousands of Liberians from all over the United States marched down Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House to the steps of our Capitol. They have since organized as Liberians United for Peace and Democracy and are working with scores of Liberian organizations like the Liberian Support Group, the Friends and Citizens of Liberia, and countless regional groups here to help foster peace in their homeland.

Dr. Beverlee Bruce, a former director of Peace Corps in Liberia and now on the Board of FOL, just returned from a two-week visit to Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast with the International Rescue Committee. When she asked refugees what it would take for them to return to Liberia, the unanimous reply was: 1) one president elected through free and fair elections 2) no more guns and 3) international sanctions against the warring faction leaders for the devastation they have caused in their country.

Why the Abuja Process has Failed to Bring Peace

The people of Liberia want peace. What prevents peace from breaking out? Just as convinced as I am in the desire of the unarmed civilians for peace and democracy, I am equally convinced that the warring factions will not move toward peace and democracy unless the unarmed civilians are supported by a strong international commitment to peace in Liberia. That international will has been pitifully lacking.

What has made the Liberian situation different from that in Bosnia is that in Bosnia, the international community, eventually and somewhat grudgingly, decided to respond with a concerted and strong diplomatic and military action. In every other respect, the need is as great. Yet we have not seen that type of focus for Liberia. Instead, we have ECOWAS, a subregional organization, shouldering almost all the responsibility for peacekeeping and diplomacy. The ECOMOG force has never been sufficiently funded and this impacts directly on its makeup and its capabilities. To complicate matters, Nigeria, the most powerful member of ECOWAS and largest contributor of both men and resources to ECOMOG, has become a pariah in the international community.

The role of ECOMOG in Liberia was cited as a model for regional peacekeeping in the first part of Liberia's war. When the need was greatest in April, that model failed tragically.

The initial ECOWAS military intervention was successful in containing the fighting in late 1990. This was a major achievement that saved lives, greatly reduced the intensity of human rights violations, and gave the warring parties an opportunity to negotiate for a cease-fire. However, the ensuing ECOWAS-imposed peace accord and its enforcement suffered from problems which, at times, called into question the partiality of the ECOMOG force, resulting in low levels of trust and respect for the ECOWAS peace process among the warring factions and even among some ECOWAS member states. These problems are as follows.

1. Failure of ECOWAS to coalesce key member states in support of its peace plan or to balance the peacekeeping force with military units from these members.
2. Lack of close cooperation between ECOWAS and the U.N. Security Council.
3. Failure to deploy peacekeepers throughout the country, which resulted in continuous fighting between factions and incursions into neighboring countries, or to enforce the U.N. arms embargo, which allowed the continued exploitation of Liberia's resources by factions.
4. The appearance of ECOMOG siding with or supporting certain factions in the course of the war.

These problems have been evident and festering for some time because of international neglect or indifference. As faction leaders took their places in a new coalition government, their followers poured into

the once-secure capital with arms and ammunition, unimpeded by the Nigerian-dominated peacekeeping force, whose reputation had been tainted by corruption and economic exploitation of the country they were ostensibly guarding.

Professor William Reno's testimony before this subcommittee on June 6 characterizes commercialism as one of the driving forces behind Liberia's war. I agree that the thirst for riches and the political and military power necessary to secure these riches have figured significantly in the conflict. The fighting that is now taking place in diamond-rich Bomi County and the logging country of southeast Liberia is to a large degree over resources. The exploitation of these resources fuel the war and rob the people of Liberia of their future. Businesses and corporations with interests in neighboring countries and throughout the world have developed ties to the warring factions and have directly and indirectly participated in the rape of Liberia. It certainly does not help that elements of ECOMOG have, as Professor Reno alleges, become motivated by business partnerships with the factions. The transitional Council of State, with three warring faction leaders, also has access to anywhere from \$25 to \$50 million in annual revenues from commissions paid into Liberia's maritime fund.

Clearly, a new international commitment to peace in Liberia must take into account the exploitation of Liberia that has become the impetus for warlords and their business partners. But the international community should not become singularly obsessed with stopping commercial trade, which even the stiffest sanctions will not completely stop. This is but one element of a more effective international peace initiative for Liberia. Commercialism, greed, thirst for power are all elements of Liberia's war. The fears of certain ethnic groups for their own security and access to political power is also an important factor. The peace process must have as its objective the formulation of political and military arrangements that marginalize these factors.

The Abuja Accord that was signed in August 1995 presented a real opportunity for peace, but there were major flaws in the design of its implementation process. As the cracks in the peace process expanded, the warring factions began drawing back from their commitment to peace and preparing for renewed conflict.

The subcommittee should, I believe, be aware of how deficiencies in the support provided by the United States government and the international community for the peace process contributed to the unraveling of the peace process.

The lack of resources to support the demobilization of combatants in the three months after the signing of the Abuja Accord is, in my opinion, the biggest single reason for the resumption of fighting in Liberia. It was not until February 1995 that the actual plan for implementing demobilization was presented by the United States and the United Nations. Not only was the demobilization plan late, but it was wholly inadequate to deal with the reintegration of up to 60,000 combatants. The demobilization plan was an attempt to use a small amount of resources to handle the single most important problem facing Liberia—the removal of arms.

The figure of \$75 million is often referred to by the State Department as its contribution to the peace process. At first blush, this looked like a considerable and adequate amount of money to move the process along and encourage other international donors to provide resources for peacekeeping, demobilization, electoral support and the reintegration of displaced persons and refugees. However, out of this \$75 million pledged by the United States, \$55 million was in the form of food assistance that could not be translated in direct support for

demobilization or peacekeeping. Half the remaining \$20 million dollars, a wholly inadequate amount, was dedicated to peacekeeping. The remaining \$10 million had to be shared by the demobilization program with programs geared to assisting refugees and internally displaced persons and preparing Liberia for elections.

Missing also from the demobilization process was the critical element of encampment as a step toward demobilization. Combatants remained in the bush for six months waiting for the start of the demobilization process. When the demobilization plan was presented, it failed to provide any resources that could be used for encampment or specialized programs that would motivate the combatant to give up the gun for the possibility of a better life.

In FOL's Position Paper of March 1996, we identified other critical flaws in the peace process including the failure of international coordination for leadership of the peace process.

In particular, we cited the inability of the Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary-General to effectively respond to the challenges of the peace process. In the months leading up to the outbreak of violence in April, we saw a United Nations that could not respond at the highest levels of representation in Liberia. The ineffectiveness of the U.N. in Liberia was illustrated when ECOMOG captured close to 700 troops from the ULIMO-J faction in early 1996. The captured troops were taken to an area outside of Monrovia for demobilization. However, the United Nations agencies responsible for conducting demobilization did not even visit the encampment site until after several weeks had passed and ECOMOG began complaining that it was waiting to demobilize the captured combatants. A perfunctory demobilization exercise was then conducted by the U.N. Observer Mission (UNOMIL) and the combatants were released back into the civilian population without counseling or training programs. This was within days of the fighting that ignited around their leader's compound in the nearby capital in April.

Mr. Anthony Nyake, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, presided over a United Nations disaster in Liberia. However, no action was taken to provide a qualified replacement and Mr. Nyake remains in Liberia. The failure of the United Nations to replace Nyake is symptomatic of the lack of focus and coordination, indeed the lack of concern, in the international community.

Revitalizing the Process of Peace: A Plan of Action

I have described just a few of the major flaws in the peace process to draw the attention of the Subcommittee to the need for international commitment and coordination. Friends of Liberia is convinced that the peace process and the people of Liberia will remain hostage to the desires of the warring factions unless the international community is prepared to launch a fresh, strong and effective initiative. No initiative will succeed until the United States has the resolve to lead a well-coordinated, multi-lateral approach to implementation that is matched by the adequate and timely introduction of resources and effective supportive diplomacy.

What we propose is a shift from a solely ECOWAS-sponsored peace process. The first step should be the convening of a multi-lateral conference hosted by the United States, the United Nations, and the government of Ghana, as chair of ECOWAS. Unarmed Liberian civilians as well as representatives of warring factions should be present. The objective of this conference should be to build a framework, supported by an adequate budget, for achieving lasting peace in Liberia. We envision a closely coordinated effort with Ghana,

the United Nations and the United States government playing lead roles.

One of the immediate objectives of the conference should be the formation of a multi-national peacekeeping force to restore a standard of security that makes possible (1) the resumption of humanitarian assistance, (2) the demobilization of combatants, and (3) a political process that will lead to free and fair election of a government of national unity. The multi-national force must be adequately manned, well-armed and authorized to use force, if necessary, to restore security to all parts of Liberia.

While units from other peacekeeping-force contributors are being mobilized, the ECOMOG units on the ground in Liberia should be brought under the authority of the United Nations or a broader multi-national command authorized by the United Nations. After consultation with ECOWAS, the high command of ECOMOG would be replaced by personnel appointed by the United Nations. Once under the new command structure, ECOMOG would receive equipment, training and other services provided by donor countries through a fund designated by the United Nations solely for supporting U.N. security operations in Liberia.

The political aspects of the peace process should be addressed at a senior level by the U.S. government, in cooperation with Ghana and the United Nations, as acceptable levels of security are achieved by the multi-national peacekeeping force in Liberia. Liberians and the international community have grave doubts about the viability of the transitional power-sharing arrangement that was created by the Abuja Accords. Nevertheless, it is recognized that the cooperation of the warring factions must be a component of a successful peace process. With this consideration in mind, the U.S. government is urged to ensure a role for the transitional government created by the Abuja Accords only if the warring factions cooperate in a comprehensive demobilization program.

As part of its heightened role in the peace process, the U.S. government should take the lead in seeing that the donor community provides sufficient funds for a serious disarmament and demobilization program that will offer combatants the prospect of successful reintegration into civilian life.

To address the proliferation of arms and illegal trade, the U.S. government, in conjunction with the United Nations Security Council, should take vigorous steps to see that nations in the West African region and elsewhere comply with the existing United Nations arms embargo on Liberia. This should mean placing sanctions on the importation of resources exported by the warring factions from Liberia. It should also mean that a freeze should be placed on legitimate sources of funding, such as Liberia's Maritime Fund, until such time as there is a viable government in Liberia.

Conclusions

On May 23, Sen. Russell Feingold, joined by four colleagues in the Senate and by Congressman Donald Payne, wrote to President Clinton requesting that he "propose and advocate among the other members of the U.N. Security Council the augmentation of the existing U.N. mission into a peacekeeping force to be sent to Liberia as soon as possible." We fully support Sen. Feingold's call for a "a new, bolder approach ...from the United States and the international community." Clearly a new approach is needed. Liberians know it. I believe the member states of ECOWAS and most other nations know that the current approach to peace in Liberia has failed.

It appears that the Clinton Administration has decided not to change its policy on Liberia in any meaningful way. It is belatedly pledging additional support to ECOMOG. It is trying to beat the drum for additional resources from the international community. It is even continuing to discuss elections without the prospect of disarmament beforehand. To its credit, it is permitting U.S. diplomats to engage in mediation, something which U.S. diplomats were not permitted to do during the first four years of Liberia's war. These actions are, however, wholly inadequate and inappropriate given recent events in Monrovia.

Madam Chairwoman, as you know, Liberia has a strong historical relationship to the United States. As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, I could tell you of the huge affection, admiration and respect that Liberians have for the United States. They do not regard their country as a dependant of the United States. They do regard their nation as one of America's closest friends and its oldest ally on the African continent. I am not proud of my government's response to the war in Liberia, but I am willing to work to help to improve that policy. I think Liberians deserve an effective peacekeeping effort, the support of the world in their search for a political settlement and ultimately a legitimate election, the first in their history. I appeal to the Subcommittee to join together to request that President Clinton launch a new international peace initiative for Liberia.

The nation's infrastructure is in ruins. Its civil society has disintegrated. An estimated 1 million Liberians are refugees around the world, their lives suspended while they wait and work for peace. A generation of children is unschooled and tens of thousands of them have been transformed by the warlords into "boy soldiers." Taking away their guns won't make them civilians. There is a long road ahead to restoring Liberia's nationhood. But that journey has not even begun through the stops and starts of 14 failed peace accords. Can we not resolve here today to join that effort to forge a lasting peace process with all the will a world leader can bring to bear?

Testimony of Kevin George

Attachments

Interaction Member Statement (May 17, 1996)

Friends of Liberia Position Paper (March 16, 1996)

InterAction News Release

American Council for Voluntary International Action

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RELEASE DATE: 17 MAY 1996

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IN RESPONSE TO THE GROWING CRISIS IN LIBERIA, 14 US HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES CALL FOR THE CREATION OF A UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING FORCE

The prolonged crisis in Liberia has forced nearly a third of the country's population to flee their homes and seek refuge abroad. An additional 40 percent of the population has become internally displaced within Liberia, dependent on others for their survival. The nation's infrastructure is in ruins. Hundreds of thousands of children are unschooled and tens of thousands have been transformed by the warlords into "boy soldiers."

The most recent fighting has brought the conflict into Monrovia, resulting in a total breakdown of law and order. Relief agencies and international organizations, which have been providing essential humanitarian services for the majority of the capital's citizens, were forced to leave Liberia. With their offices looted, their vehicles stolen and the lives of their staff at risk in the continuing chaos, it is not clear what assistance they will be able to provide. Relief activities in the countryside also have been disrupted by the spreading conflict.

Years of negotiations have failed to resolve the conflict among Liberia's warlords. The pleas of the Liberian people for peace continue to be ignored by those leading the various armed factions.

In order to bring an end to suffering of the Liberian people, the undersigned agencies urge:

- That the United States government recommend to other members of the United Nations Security Council the formation of a United Nations peacekeeping force which would be sent to Liberia as soon as possible. The goal of this operation would be to restore security so that conditions can be created that make possible (1) the resumption of humanitarian assistance, (2) the demobilization of combatants, and (3) a political process which will lead to free and fair election of a government of national unity.
- That the U.S. government take the initiative to see that, while units from other peacekeeping-force contributors are being mobilized, the ECOMOG units on the ground in Liberia be brought under the authority of the United Nations. After consultation with ECOWAS, the high command of ECOMOG would be replaced by personnel appointed by the United Nations Security Council. Once under United Nations command, ECOMOG would receive equipment, training and other services provided by donor countries through a fund designated by the United Nations solely for supporting U.N. security operations in Liberia.
- That those West African governments which have provided refuge to almost a million Liberians be

commanded and encouraged by the U.S. government to maintain open borders for Liberians fleeing their country by whatever means. Particular attention should be paid at this time to the urgent humanitarian needs of persons fleeing violence by sea.

- That the international community be encouraged by the U.S. government to provide more generous support to those West African governments assisting Liberian refugees. The U.S. government should increase its own level of support to those governments.
- That political aspects of the peace process be addressed at a senior level by the U.S. government as acceptable levels of security are achieved by the U.N. Peacekeeping Force in Liberia. It is clear that Liberians and the international community have grave doubts about the viability of the transitional power-sharing arrangement that was created by the Abuja Accords. Nevertheless, it is recognized that the cooperation of the warring factions would be a component of a successful peace process. With this consideration in mind, the U.S. government is urged to ensure that the United Nations permits a role for the Transitional Government created by the Abuja Accords, only if the warring factions participate in a comprehensive demobilization program.
- That the U.S. government take the lead in seeing that the donor community provides sufficient funds for a serious disarmament and demobilization program which will offer combatants the prospect of successful reintegration into civilian life.
- That the U.S. government, in conjunction with the United Nations Security Council, take vigorous steps to see that nations in the West African region and elsewhere comply with the existing United Nations arms embargo on Liberia.
- That the United States naval vessels currently off Monrovia, or replacements with similar capabilities, remain on station off Liberia.

Adventist Development and Relief Agency International

Africare

American Refugee Committee

CARE

Church World Service

Episcopal Migration Ministries

Friends of Liberia

International Rescue Committee

Refugees International

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

Trickle Up Program

United Methodist Committee on Relief

World Relief

World Vision US

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Interaction, a membership association of more than 150 U.S. non-profit organizations, is the nation's leading advocate for international humanitarian efforts including relief, development, refugee assistance, environment, population, and global education.



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POSITION PAPER

Liberia: Placing the Peace Process Back on Track

A Critical Time for Effective Action

Six months after the signing of the Abuja Accord the peace process in Liberia is in a state of atrophy. Disarmament, encampment and the reintegration of combatants is over three months behind schedule. Despite these delays there is still good reason to believe that the peace process can be revitalized. To do so will require the international supporters of peace in Liberia and the Transitional Government to identify the obstacles to "true peace" and quickly embark upon a strategy that avoids an "interminable" process.

On March 27 the leaders of the countries comprising the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will convene in Ghana to review Liberia's peace process. This summit can be the pivotal event that places the peace process back on track. We urge the parties playing important roles at this summit, including the United States government, ECOWAS, and the Transitional Government, to adopt the five steps outlined in this position paper for successfully moving Liberia to lasting peace and democracy.

Prepared by FOL's Working Group for Peace

March 16, 1996

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POSITION PAPER

Liberia: Placing the Peace Process Back on Track**A Critical Time for Effective Action****I. Executive Summary**

In this position paper, Friends of Liberia's (FOL) Working Group for Peace identifies the major weaknesses in the peace process and recommends the steps that the international community and Liberians should take to place that process back on track. We believe that these steps are not mutually exclusive in that they address a range of interrelated weaknesses in the peace process. Therefore, the following steps should be acted upon as part of an integrated solution to bring lasting peace to Liberia.

- Require the warring factions to take positive steps, such as the systematic encampment of combatants, as a means of restoring confidence in the peace process.
- Enhance international coordination and leadership by appointing a highly qualified representative of the U.N. Secretary-General and formalizing a structure for multi-lateral cooperation with the formation of a Contact Group for Peace in Liberia.
- Establish special programs to motivate combatants to participate in demobilization.
- Improve the effectiveness of ECOMOG by establishing and supporting a rapid reaction component.
- Encourage an electoral system based on proportional representation as the means to include a range of factions, political parties and segments of society in an elected government of national unity.

The remainder of this paper examines each of these recommendations in detail.

II. A Critical Opportunity to Place the Peace Process on Track

The warring factions in Liberia signed a peace agreement in Abuja, Nigeria on August 19, 1995, which moved the peace process past some of the most contentious issues that contributed to the failure of past agreements. The Abuja Accord includes provisions on the makeup and authority of a power-sharing Council of State that will lead the nation to a democratically elected government. A cease-fire, the first step in implementation of the Abuja Accord, began on August 26. The new Council of State, with both warring faction and civilian representatives, was installed on September 1.

Six months after the signing of the Abuja Accord, the peace process is in a state of atrophy. Disarmament, encampment and the reintegration of fighters is over three months behind schedule. ECOMOG, the West African peacekeeping force, has been unable to deploy throughout the nation. Serious cease-fire violations are continuing in two areas of the country. Refugees have been unable to return to their homes. NGO's engaged in humanitarian relief are finding it increasingly dangerous to perform their work.

Despite the obstacles that are impeding the process of peace, there is still good reason to believe the peace process in Liberia can be saved and that the lack of progress can be reversed. There is evidence that the warring factions that coalesced into a transitional government last September remain committed to the political aspects of the Abuja Accord. Faction leaders have resisted returning to the battlefield and remain as active members of the Council of State. A tenuous general cease-fire, despite violations, continues to be observed in most parts of the country. Most importantly, the people of Liberia, even after six years of war, continue to believe that the Abuja Accord can bring them lasting peace and democracy. In February of this year they showed their support for the peace process through a massive stay-at-home strike in support of peace.

On March 27 the leaders of the countries comprising the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) will meet in Ghana to review Liberia's peace process. The summit will be preceded by two-days of consultation among the foreign ministers of the nine countries forming the ECOWAS Committee on Liberia. The ECOWAS summit can be the pivotal event that places the peace process back on track. It is the opportunity for the international community, Liberia's Transitional Government, and the warring factions to frankly examine the problems that have contributed to a stalled process and to agree upon arrangements that will help move Liberia to the critical steps of demobilization and elections.

III. Moving the Peace Process Forward

Warring Factions Must Show an Unconditional Commitment to Peace

Given the slow unraveling of the Abuja Accords and associated security concerns on the ground in Liberia, it is not surprising that international supporters of peace in Liberia are skeptical. The inability and perhaps the unwillingness of the warring faction leaders to control their forces in the field have, at times, created an impression that they are not proactive agents for peace but

that the peace process is subservient to their needs and demands. On the other hand, it should be recognized that these faction leaders took a major step towards peace when they committed to participate in the Transitional Government created by the Abuja Accord. The fact that this participation continues, and that the principal faction leaders have not abandoned the process, is evidence that the process of peace can be revitalized. Nonetheless, it is incumbent on the members of the Council of State, and particularly the warring faction leaders, to show that they can work together in the interest of peace and are fully committed to the transitional process that will lead to demobilization and fair elections.

In return for the assistance already promised by donor governments and organizations, and the further international support proposed by FOL, the warring factions must formally recommit themselves to the peace process. Statements by the Council of State and faction leaders will not be enough to produce confidence.

A positive and appropriate action by the warring faction leaders would be to order and arrange for the immediate encampment of combatants at secure sites. These encampment sites should be positioned so that unarmed combatants may more easily avail themselves of the programs offered by the Area Reintegration Centers.

This step, encampment of combatants, beside providing the obvious assurances to the international supporters of the peace process, would also help overcome a problem that has contributed to cease-fire violations: the lack of "command and control" between the faction leaders in Monrovia and their combatants in the field.

Enhancing International Coordination and Leadership of the Peace Process

Strong diplomatic leadership was necessary to broker the Abuja Accord in August 1995. President Jerry Rawlings, as Chairman of ECOWAS, led a sustained and focused diplomatic effort that resulted in an accord widely viewed as Liberia's best chance for peace in six years. Mr. Rawlings' efforts on behalf of ECOWAS were supported by the resources of the U.S. government and the diplomacy of President Clinton's Special Envoy to Liberia. However, it has been the implementation of the Accord that has proven problematic.

Over the past several months we have witnessed delays in material and financial support, the inability of ECOMOG to deploy throughout the nation or to stop minor altercations from becoming major cease-fire violations, and very slow progress in setting up a system for the demobilization of combatants. It is not surprising that there has been a rise in tension and an increasing number of cease-fire violations.

The challenge is for the warring factions to carry-out their commitments under the agreement in good faith, for the members of the Council of State to effectively work together as an executive unit of government, for peacekeeping troops to control violations of the cease-fire, for the donor countries to match the resources necessary to implement each phase of the peace process, for the international envoys to help the warring factions overcome impediments to the process through effective diplomacy, and for the international community to make clear its expectations

concerning the outcome of the peace process.

There is a cause and effect relationship between the above stated components. For example, the peace process stalled when resources were delayed or not sufficient for deployment of ECOMOG and for demobilization. A stalled process led to tension between warring factions and peacekeepers, and eventually to cease-fire violations. Cease-fire violations led to suspicion of the process by donor countries, creating resistance on their part to release resources that were already late. This cycle of ineffectiveness, bad faith and confusion, unless checked, will lead to the further unraveling of the peace process.

A major reason for the inability to build upon the momentum of the Abuja Accord, and to overcome obstacles to its implementation, are shortcomings in leadership and coordination by the international supporters of peace in Liberia. To address this problem, FOL urges that the following steps be taken.

- **The appointment of a highly qualified Special Representative for Liberia by U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali.**
- **The implementation of a formal structure for multi-lateral cooperation via a Contact Group for Peace in Liberia composed of the international supporters of peace in Liberia.**

An effective U.N. Special Representative and the Contact Group will help bridge the gap between the diplomatic efforts of ECOWAS and the coordination of resources necessary to implement the Abuja Accord.

Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General

It is essential that the international community provide the leadership that will support ECOWAS and help Liberians overcome obstacles to peace. In Cambodia, Mozambique and more recently Angola a strong representative of the United Nations Secretary General has kept the peace process on track. We believe that a strong UN diplomatic presence, led by an exceptionally skilled representative of the UN Secretary General, can make a significant difference in Liberia if supported by adequate resources.

The term of the current representative to Liberia of the UN Secretary General is due to end in April. Friends of Liberia strongly recommends that his replacement be a distinguished individual with the diplomatic and leadership skills to effectively direct the operations of the United Nations in Liberia. It would be a valuable asset if the person appointed as the Special Representative has significant experience in military or peacekeeping operations.

Contact Group for Peace in Liberia

It is not enough, however, to simply have an effective representative of the Secretary-General. Previous attempts to bring peace to Liberia share a common weakness: the lack of a well-coordinated, multi-lateral approach that matches the adequate and timely introduction of resources, and effective supportive diplomacy, to the implementation of a negotiated agreement.

must be prepared to adjust their strategies to include a substantial amount of funding for specialized training, education or work programs that effectively promote encampment, demobilization, and reintegration. The most important short-range goal of these programs will be to engage combatants in productive work, study or training for a period of six to twelve months. This permits a transition period for combatants during the delicate period leading through elections and while Liberia's economy begins to grow and jobs are created.

Friends of Liberia strongly recommends a reexamination of the strategy for demobilization by the governments and international organizations supporting peace in Liberia. The donor governments should dedicate the additional resources necessary to establish the effective short-term work, training and educational programs that will facilitate the transition of combatants into a civil society. These programs will provide a major incentive for combatants to lay down their arms. The additional investment necessary for an effective demobilization program will only be a fraction of the huge cost associated with continuing to assist victims of an unresolved and protracted conflict.

Improve the Effectiveness of ECOMOG

ECOMOG, the West African peacekeeping force in Liberia, has been unable to effectively gain control of the security situation. Ideally this force would have deployed throughout the country within the three months of relative peace and good-will that followed the signing of the Abuja Accord. ECOMOG, however, was unwilling and, perhaps, incapable of deploying until it expanded its force to 12,000 troops and obtained additional resources from international donors including trucks, personnel carriers and communications gear. Seven months after the signing of the Abuja Accord, ECOMOG has approximately 8,000 troops and has just recently obtained some of the resources promised by international donors.

In the past three months, Liberia has seen a spate of cease-fire violations including fighting between ECOMOG and the ULIMO-J faction in Tubmanburg, and skirmishing in the Southeast between NPFL and LPC forces. ECOMOG has on several occasions retreated, leaving civilians unprotected, when faced with a cease-fire violation. Despite these setbacks there is still evidence that the warring faction leaders are substantially committed to the peace process and are willing to demobilize if ECOMOG shows the capability of effectively and even-handedly providing a secure environment.

The effectiveness of ECOMOG is a critical element of the peace process. It is true that this effectiveness is contingent on other factors such as command and control by warring faction leaders over far-flung contingents and a demobilization operation that is attractive enough to produce voluntarily disarmament. Nevertheless, confidence in the capability of ECOMOG to provide security underlies the entire peace process from demobilization to the holding of free and fair elections. There is evidence that ECOMOG, as constituted, is not capable of commanding the level of control necessary to produce this confidence.

Friends of Liberia recognizes that there is not an abundance of funds necessary for expanding and equipping ECOMOG to levels that would drape Liberia in a blanket of security. However,

there are cost-effective ways to bolster ECOMOG short of a large increase in personnel and equipment.

An important option to consider would be the creation of rapid reaction battalion that could effectively intervene in trouble spots without jeopardizing the security of areas already protected by a thinly-stretched ECOMOG. Ghana, with well-trained military forces experienced in international peacekeeping, could be the source for this new component of ECOMOG. The international donors should support the creation of this force and explore other options for improving peacekeeping in Liberia.

Restructuring Elections to Promote National Unity

Free and fair elections are viewed by Liberians and the international community as a necessary outcome of the peace process. It is important though that elections serve as the glue that holds together the peace process rather than a potentially divisive force that could exclude factions and segments of Liberian society from the transition process.

Under Liberia's current law the electoral process would result in a "winner take all" outcome. The candidate receiving a majority of votes would become president with the right to appoint all members of cabinet. It is likely that the party of the winning candidate would also control the legislature. In that scenario the "losing" parties would have no official role and very little interest in the success of the resulting government. This exclusionary outcome, even if held under free and fair conditions, could make elections the catalyst for renewed conflict rather than a rallying point for the continuing transition to peace, democracy and reconstruction.

The very nature of the "winner take all" structure may also be an impediment to the warring factions' willingness to relinquish control over their fighting forces, the primary source of their power vis-a-vis each other and the civilian population. To the warring faction leader, and his political/military followers, the underlying problem is that "winner take all" elections may not offer security. Instead, these elections create a risk that a military opponent will be legitimized through the ballot box. In the mind of the faction leader, particularly those representing minority segments of society, the traditional electoral structure offers few incentives to completely abandon the gun for the ballot box.

The proportional representation model has been successfully adopted by several of the newly democratizing states of southern Africa. South Africa's new constitutional order provides an exceptional example to other nations emerging from civil and ethnic strife. The interim constitution of South Africa is structured to promote stability by allowing an opportunity for divergent groups to work together in a power sharing government. Namibia, following South Africa's lead, also recently adopted proportional representation. By contrast, Angola planted the seeds for the collapse of a peace process when its elections were run under a "winner-take-all" electoral system. UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, marginalized by an election result that left him with minimal representation in an elected government, resumed a violent struggle when he came in second place to President Jose dos Santos in the first round of elections.



The corresponding three levels of responsibility in the denouement of the crisis have entailed (1) the efforts of the Interfaith Mediation Committee and the All-Liberia Conference series at the National level; (2) the ECOWAS efforts that produced the Banjul framework of 1990 and that of Abuja in 1995 at the Regional level; and (3) the efforts on part of the United States, the U.N. and now the collaborative Contact Group at the Global level.

What seems important in all of the foregoing is the envisaging of inter-connections, the inter-relationship between conflict at the three levels , and the pursuit of resolution efforts simultaneously across levels. How can we bring about committed simultaneously collaboration across levels -- National, Regional, Global, each energizing or reinforcing the other?

Madame Chair, having suggested a framework within which we might understand the conflict as a whole, I will now turn to addressing issues regarding the relationship of the Liberian factions to West African regional powers and leaders. I will touch upon as well the issue of support for the factions from extra-regional parties.

Regional neutrality may have rendered impossible initiation or sustenance of the civil war. The attitude of Liberia's immediate neighbors have been particularly crucial since each seem to have had a stake in political outcomes in Liberia, especially since the 1980 coup d'état. Sierra Leone had a well-founded fear that a sergeant could topple the then Sieka Stevens regime. Besides, President Stevens in 1985 reportedly "made available military facilities in his country to Liberian General Thomas Quiwonkpa's Patriotic Front, a forerunner of Charles Taylor's NPFL. Quiwonkpa entered Liberia from Sierra Leone on 14 November 1985 in his unsuccessful bid to depose Liberian President Samuel Doe. Stevens' successor, General Joseph Momoh "placed at the disposal of certain Liberian groups training facilities at Camp Samu after 1985.", and permitted the formation and operation of ULIMO in Freetown.

Likewise, the Ivory Coast had demonstrated its sympathies for those who fled Doe's repression in 1985, and the regime of the late Ivorian leader, Felix Houphout-Boigny seemed keen on actively aiding attempts to depose Doe and possibly install an NPFL government in Liberia. The Ivorian leader and other senior Ivorian officials enjoyed personal and cordial ties with the government of deposed Liberian President William R. Tolbert, Jr. They seem never

to have forgiven Doe for the brutal excesses of the 1980 coup. The Ivorian motives for aiding the NPFL include the Tolbert ties factor, as well as ethnic considerations given the fact that Dahn, Mano and other ethnic groups are divided at the Ivorian-Liberian border and a form of genocide was evidently threatening some on the Liberian side.

The motives extend to the politics of the sub-region and involved Ivorian/French interests in containing Nigeria's presumed hegemonic tendencies. Such efforts at containing Nigeria had inspired Ivorian and French recognitions, respectively of "Biafra" during the Nigerian civil war. Now the support of the NPFL was "subterranean, cleverly packaged as uncontrollable private business deals." It included sanctuary to the NPFL and diplomatic support to its "government".

To the Ivorian effort must be joined the Burkinabe for the post-sankara Burkinabe ties with the Ivory Coast and its leader may account for the large measure of support for the NPFL. There is ample documentation of Burkinabe regulars (the number has ranged from 400 to 700, to even 1000) fighting along side Taylor's forces, of Taylor's use of Burkinabe aircrafts as he shuttled in the sub-region.

Guinea has harbored ethnic and religious sympathies for Mandingo-Liberians who were allied with Doe and therefore targeted by Dahn and Mano-Liberians of the NPFL. But it must equally be pointed out that members of the Kpelle, Kissi and Loma ethnic groups have their permanent homes on both sides of the Guinean-Liberian borders. The use of Guinean territory seem motivated by these and other considerations. With the formation of the ULIMO faction, at one point led exclusively by a Mandingo-Liberian whose grandfather is a Guinean, the support became clearer. Though disclaiming support for any one faction Guinea does not hide well its sympathy for Alhaji Kromah (leader of ULIMO-K). Guinean Interior Minister Rene Gomez has said: "Like many Liberians he [Kromah] originates from Guinea. His grandparents are in Guinea so we cannot prevent him from coming 'home' like many other Liberians".

It is difficult to imagine how the insurgency could have gone forward in the absence of all of these facilities and measures of support. They have therefore been crucial in fueling the internal Liberian conflict.

Liberia. It is not likely to take efforts to marginalize it lying down. This could mean an escalation of the crisis at the regional level.

What should be happening instead is that the global level of involvement, led by the U.S. and the Contact Group should be, this time providing ECOMOG not only with the wherewithal to fulfill a clearer mandate (arrived at through consultation at the three levels), but sustaining this effort by advancing disarmament in the socio-economic framework suggested above.

But none of this, Madam Chair, is likely to advance the peace process if the critical leadership factor at the three levels remain confused, diffused or non-existent.

This is why I believe that a critical leadership role for the United States cannot be overemphasized. Why is this so?

1. Because the ingredients are absent for such a leadership to emerge at the Liberian national level of involvement. When it does come to Liberia it will be a result of concerted effort at the three levels.
2. Because the material resources are meager at the regional level.
3. Because it is in the national interest of the United States so to lead. And this is so because of at least three reasons:
 - West African regional stability means American legitimate business opportunities. Liberia is in West Africa.
 - The U.S. cannot afford to withdraw from an Africa at the cutting edge of some of the major emerging issues on the post-Cold War agenda (Islamic fundamentalism, women's rights, human rights, refugees, democracy, development)
 - There is a near universal perception that the ties of history between the U.S. and Liberia impose on the former a "special responsibility".

Finally, Madam Chair, the challenge for all involved in the search for peace in Liberia is to find a way to effect interaction of the

three levels of responsibility -- the National, the Regional, and the Global; determining the critical leadership role, determining the possibilities for political will to act.

Mission Itinerary:

The mission visited Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Zambia. In all countries the team met with UNHCR and NGO officials and had the opportunity to interview refugees in camps, settlement sites, and urban areas. The team concentrated on the West Africa region, looking into the situation of Liberian refugees. Two members of the team gave additional attention to the circumstances of Liberian refugees and the plight of internally displaced Sierra Leoneans. Two delegation members extended the group's attention to urban refugees through visits in Kenya and Zambia.

A two-week trip to six countries does not permit an exhaustive treatment of either the Liberian refugee crisis or the urban refugee phenomenon. This summary report is therefore not intended as a comprehensive analysis of complex political realities, but rather focuses on themes and seeks to highlight specific issues of significant humanitarian concern.

A. LIBERIAN REFUGEES**Findings:**

1. The recent outbreak of violence in Liberia has convinced most Liberians that the situation in that country is hopeless, and that there will be no easy end to the civil war that has caused much persecution and suffering. Plans for repatriation, much alive just a few months ago, are now abandoned. The team received first hand reports from church workers and newly arriving refugees, telling harrowing stories of escape through rebel held check points, extortion, looting of homes and businesses in Monrovia, and serious difficulty in making the journey to safety.
2. Unlike many other African refugees, Liberians have close historical and family ties to the US. Many have studied in and/or visited the US and have family members in both countries. However, restrictive US policies have separated families already torn apart by the conflict. An example of the disregard for family relationships is the fact that families were unjustifiably separated when US citizens and other foreign nationals were evacuated by the USG from Monrovia: only one parent was allowed to escort an US citizen child, leaving behind spouses and other siblings.
3. The premature end to the already restrictive P-3 refugee family reunion program for Liberian refugees has caused difficulty for many family members left behind in difficult first asylum circumstances. The reasons for the ending of the Liberian P-3 program in 1995 were allegations of fraud in claims of family relationships. To the extent that such false claims existed, one reason for this may have been restrictive policies that pushed people to claim closer family relationships than what was allowed. At the same time, the wholesale destruction of offices and document registries within Liberia makes it difficult

to verify some family relationships. Such reasons should not be the obstacle in resuming a much-needed family reunion program for Liberians.

4. Although the welcome given to refugees by West African first asylum countries has been exemplary, in many ways exceeding that of nations in Europe and North America, there are signs that this generosity may be waning. At the official level, refugees are accorded many rights available to local citizens. However, after six years, the local officials and inhabitants may be growing tired of accepting and assisting refugees, as incursions by Liberian rebel forces into Cote d'Ivoire have caused resentment and fear. The rejection by West African countries of the leaky boats carrying refugees is a dramatic example of the refoulement that will likely continue in the region if a comprehensive solution to the Liberian refugee crisis is not found.
5. Consistent with a recent ECOWAS pronouncement, the government of Sierra Leone recently reiterated that it will no longer allow Liberian refugees to enter. This decision was based in part on security concerns; the government believes the five-year conflict in Sierra Leone is finally abating and does not want a return to 1991 when the Liberian conflict spilled over the border, creating up to 1.5 million internally displaced persons. The new policy is already being enforced at the border (potentially causing problems for returning Sierra Leoneans as well) as well as at seaports. In anticipation of further arrivals by sea, UNHCR in Sierra Leone has proposed the use of an available offshore island to conduct individual refugee status determinations, in order to address both the protections needs and security concerns. However, Sierra Leone has refused to consider this proposal, and the US Ambassador is in agreement that the security risks are too great. Thus, a harsh policy of refoulement exists with respect to Liberian refugees.
6. As in other African countries, the policy of many West African nations, tacitly endorsed by the UNHCR and major donors, is to require that refugees live in rural camps or rural local settlements (often called "assistance zones") as a condition of receiving assistance from UNHCR, including the WFP food rations. Refugees who choose to live instead in urban areas are denied food, medical, and other assistance. This policy stems in part from cost considerations as well as from the desire to discourage continued urban influx. However, many Liberians, especially those from Monrovia, cannot adequately survive in the "assistance zones" due to the isolation and harshness of some of these settlements. Many of these urban refugees arrive destitute and are given the choice of either meager food assistance and seeds/tools in the rural settlement or no assistance if they reside in the urban areas.
7. The reason for lower-than-anticipated recent arrivals of Liberian refugees is, according to informed sources, the fact that many Liberians remain stranded on the road north from Monrovia to either Guinea or Cote d'Ivoire. According to UNHCR in Guinea, about 100,000 Liberians from Monrovia may be trapped on the way north, held up by faction forces in check points, unable to pay the necessary bribes for safe passage. UNHCR was.

Recommendations:

- A.1 As the violence and desperation in Liberia grow, the international community must make renewed efforts to bring an end to the war and to establish peace and security in the country. This is a major and complex task -- the combatants must be disarmed, political solutions must be established, and appropriate international support must be mobilized. While solutions to Liberia's internal problems were outside the scope of this mission, the delegation members feel strongly that given the scope of the suffering and the desperation of the people, the international community must not continue "business as usual." The United Nations Secretary General, the Organization of African Unity, the West African states, and the US Government should make a priority of ending the war in Liberia.
- A.2 While efforts must be intensified to bring about an end to the conditions that have uprooted 80% of Liberia's population, the international community must also increase its work to ensure that those who are uprooted receive the protection and assistance they need. The United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs needs to intensify coordinated humanitarian response in collaboration with NGOs. Donors need to mobilize more funds to support refugees and displaced people in the region.
- A.3 In trying to resolve the smaller but highly visible case of Liberians fleeing in boats who have not been allowed to land, the US should intensify its ongoing efforts to convince West African nations to discontinue all repoulement of Liberian refugees and to resume their longstanding policy of first asylum. The US should assure such nations that, in the spirit of burden sharing, we and the UNHCR will work to quickly provide resettlement opportunities for a significant number of the refugees allowed in for first asylum.
- A.4 The US Congress should provide additional funds for the voluntary contributions to WFP and for the US food aid program, in order to assure the adequacy of food rations for Liberian and other refugees.
- A.5 The US should urge the WFP and the UNHCR to reconsider the decision to cut back food assistance for Liberians who are not in the designated target groups. In particular, those families who are not assisted through agricultural or other income generating programs should not be cut off prematurely, given the precarious relationship with local landlords and the share cropping system.
- A.6 The establishment of safe-haven zones within Liberia is unworkable and should be resisted. However, the US should immediately assess the feasibility of cross border assistance to persons who have fled Monrovia and are stuck along the highways in check points leading to Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. Many of these refugees are without food or shelter as the rainy season starts, and they could face serious problems if not cared for or allowed to proceed to safety. Although security concerns would determine the extent of

such targeted cross border operations, all options should be considered in order to get needed supplies through to these desperate refugees.

- A.7. Immediate family members of Liberians separated by the evacuation policy of the US Embassy in Monrovia should be expeditiously reunited with their spouses and children in the US, through a cooperative effort by the UNHCR and the US resettlement program.
- A.8. The US program should use the unallocated reserve of 3,000 refugee admission numbers in FY 1996 to immediately establish a program for Liberian refugee family reunification. This reserve was designed for emergencies such as these, and it should be used at this time.
- A.9. Refugee processing priorities for Liberians should be expanded immediately, to include P1 through P4, with special attention given to the small number of families separated through the evacuation program for US citizens.
- A.10. A refugee processing system should be immediately established in West Africa to facilitate intakes and screening of cases; in the case of UNHCR referrals, arrangements could be made for a secondment of staff particularly in Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire to help expedite P-1 referrals among the new arrivals coming from Monrovia.
- A.11. The Attorney General should generously exercise her parole authority for Liberians who need US admission but do not fit the strict guidelines of the US program.
- A.12. Liberians who are in the US under Temporary Protected Status should be allowed to be reunited with their immediate family members who are stuck in Monrovia or who have been able to flee to neighboring West African countries. The US should encourage UNHCR to help facilitate this small number of cases for resettlement in the United States.
- A.13. InterAction agencies and other private sector organizations should make Liberian refugees a priority for advocacy work. NGOs concerned with Liberia should organize more effective advocacy and information-sharing about actual conditions in Liberia and the situations of Liberian refugees. Specifically, InterAction should organize a working group on Liberia and a Liberia lobby day to inform members of Congress and their staffs about the situation there and in the region. Liberians living in the US should be encouraged and assisted in contacting their Congressional representatives to urge that the US play its proper role in resolving the conflict and to raise questions about the inequities of resettlement for Liberian family members.
- A.14. NGOs should intensify efforts to raise funds to support Liberian refugees in the region.

B. URBAN REFUGEES THROUGHOUT AFRICA

Findings:

1. As discussed above, the policy of many African nations, tacitly endorsed by the UNHCR and major donors, is to require refugees to live in rural camps or rural settlements (often called "assistance zones") as a condition of receiving assistance from UNHCR, including the WFP food rations. Since most of Africa's refugees come from rural settings, this policy seems to have worked well for situations of large influx: it is particularly appropriate where the governments have provided access to land. However, refugees of urban background in their country of origin have found themselves in very difficult circumstances as a result of this policy. Thus, while many African countries have been generous and opened their doors to large numbers of refugees, there has been a more restrictive attitude toward urban refugees who refuse or cannot move into the rural settlements or remote refugee camps.
2. African governments are understandably concerned about policies that might draw refugees to urban areas. They already face serious urban problems: the growth in the population of cities, with all of the economic, political, and social consequences, is a major challenge to most African governments. Nevertheless, a comprehensive solution to this urban refugee phenomenon is currently not in place.
3. The scope of the urban refugee problem in Africa is of manageable proportions. In some cases their numbers are in the hundreds, in other urban centers only a few thousand. While the efforts of African countries may seem justifiable in certain circumstances (avoiding overcrowding in the cities, potential for criminality, lack of housing and employment, etc.), the fact remains that since urban refugees do not go to the rural and often inaccessible "assistance zones," they remain unprotected and unassisted in the larger towns and cities. The current policy of forcing all refugees to move to rural isolated areas is both unsuccessful and not respectful of human dignity.
4. Although there are some worthwhile NGO programs for urban refugees, and some minimum UNHCR assistance available for especially vulnerable people, urban refugees are not well served by this present assistance policy. Given that urban refugees are often better educated and may have been politically active, they often are sources of discomfort for local governments.
5. Most urban refugees refuse to move to these remote areas, and they end up surviving on the hospitality and generosity of NGOs and local populations. This situation exacerbates tensions with local populations, negatively impacts the willingness of first asylum countries to offer protection, and creates negative social tendencies in the communities where the refugees live. Thus, the strategy of pushing all refugees to "assistance zones,"

settlement sites or refugee camps has a high human cost, particularly as refugee situations become semi-permanent.

6. The apriori assumption that refugees who remain in urban centers are able to achieve self-sufficiency without assistance is not necessarily true. Many refugees in urban areas may not seek assistance from UNHCR because the offices are not readily accessible.
7. There are no clear criteria articulated by UNHCR as to who is an urban refugee, so that the registration process does not maintain data on this phenomenon. As a result, field staff apply their own subjective criteria (education level only, for example).
8. There are significant protection needs, particularly for urban refugees, that go unattended because of lack of UNHCR staff resources. While there is a "theoretical" and verbal assurance that refugees' asylum needs are being met by many African states, many serious problems persist at the implementing level. This is particularly the case with access to labor markets, small business loans, and work permits for self-employment and for highly trained professionals.
9. While African states have historically granted first asylum to many refugees, the generosity exhibited for the massive refugee situations arising from the wars of liberation is being challenged by new populations of refugees who do not easily fit the patterns of the past. The needs of urban refugees of many nationalities cannot all be addressed by a large overall strategy, but require carefully calibrated assistance specific to their needs.
10. Large repatriation programs for some refugee groups in Africa have been successful, and more are on the horizon (e.g., Angolans). At the same time, while the large groups of refugees from rural areas in the country of origin may be able to go home without serious problems, smaller pockets of refugees will not be able to return as readily. In any repatriation there will be individuals who cannot return, often because they supported the losing side in the conflict. Legal protection, local integration and durable solutions through resettlement must be used for these easily definable and smaller groups, at the same time that voluntary repatriation is pursued for the larger caseload. Such comprehensive strategies/solutions should be considered when planning and setting up large repatriation programs.
11. In formulating comprehensive strategies for urban refugees, care must be taken to ensure fairness and equity in assistance and to avoid perceptions of privileged treatment for elite groups. Rather, just as the international community has recognized that specific groups of refugees -- such as refugee children, female heads of households, and elderly refugees -- require special attention, additional effort is needed to meet the needs of urban refugees.

Recommendations:

- B.1. Comprehensive initiatives should address the needs of African urban refugees recognized by UNHCR, including work with governments to address permanent legal status, work authorization, access to education, and efforts to achieve self-sufficiency through micro enterprises, small business loans, skills training, and other joint strategies involving local residents and refugees together. Such projects could be done in conjunction with development assistance through other entities, including multilateral banks, that also address the needs of local residents and citizens. These initiatives should complement the ongoing assistance provided to refugees in rural settlements and camps.
- B.2. Preconditions for such new initiatives must include direct negotiations with host governments to give permanent legal status to refugees who can integrate locally, facilitating access to work permits and freedom of commerce and movement.
- B.3. Given the legitimate desires of African countries to discourage unnecessary migration to urban areas, programs to assist and protect urban refugees should not be a magnet to encourage refugees to migrate to the cities. Rather, they should be targeted toward UNHCR recognized refugees living in urban areas who are vulnerable to exploitation and harassment.
- B.4. Humanitarian considerations require that an analysis be done on the background of specific refugee groups and individuals before unilateral and unappealable decisions are made for urban refugees, such as the cut off of food assistance for Liberian refugees in Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea. The U.S. Congress should provide adequate funding for WFP contributions and the US food aid program to meet the assistance needs of urban refugees in Africa.
- B.5. UNHCR and the US program should consider resettlement for discrete subsets of urban refugee populations, particularly those who have remained in uncertain first asylum situations for longer periods of time and for whom repatriation and local integration are not viable options. Resettlement as a durable solution should be done carefully so as to not exacerbate host country conditions and to minimize any potential pull factor resettlement may have on other urban refugee populations.
- B.6. The US should actively pursue additional funds for the Migration and Refugee Assistance account, for services through active NGOs, to address care and maintenance needs of urban refugees in the short term, and legal status adjustment and self-sufficiency projects in the long term.

C. US RESETTLEMENT AND AFRICAN REFUGEES

Findings:

1. Since the reformulation of US processing priorities in FY 1996, the UNHCR has increased the number of referrals for the US program. Both UNHCR and US program officials should be commended for trying to make the program work. Close to 1,000 UNHCR P-1 referrals have been made thus far in FY 1996.
2. Many more African refugees have access to the US resettlement program through the new regional approach of UNHCR, the US State Department, the US/INS and the Joint Voluntary Agency. Under this approach, the US program works cooperatively with UNHCR throughout the African region, to help identify cases for US resettlement.
3. At the same time, there remains a "vicious circle" of non-referrals and subsequent lack of action in the whole relationship between the US program and UNHCR. This was most evident in conversations with UNHCR field staff and US personnel vis-a-vis the Liberian refugees. UNHCR often does not refer cases because it perceives that US African admission numbers are low, and they want the referred cases to be approved. At the same time, the low number of UNHCR referrals is used by US officials to justify low admission ceilings for the region, or in the case of Liberian refugees, the elimination of Liberian refugee family reunification.
4. Given the critical role of INS in overseas refugee processing, INS officers must be fully trained in both refugee adjudication practices and in African country conditions. The new development within INS of selecting TDY refugee adjudicators from the US asylum corps is a welcome development. Since there has been little on-the-ground experience with this new approach, close monitoring is needed to assure quality control and good adjudications.
5. Recent developments in the UNHCR resettlement section are also encouraging. Training sessions in Africa that involved US government, NGOs (Joint Voluntary Agency) and UNHCR protection and other officers have proven indispensable in sustaining and enhancing the progress made with the regionalization of the US program.
6. There are virtually no referrals of refugee cases by US embassies throughout the African region. This alternative avenue of access for Priority One cases to the US program was intended to serve those refugees who do not have access to the UNHCR, or those cases in which the UNHCR is not prepared to make a referral for various reasons.

7. Similarly, the avenue of embassy referrals was intended to provide access to NGOs to bring special refugee cases to the attention of the US government. To date, there is no systematic process by which NGOs can refer cases to the embassy for inclusion in the US program. There seems to be a lack of understanding by embassy staff about the possibilities for P-1 referrals outside the UNHCR process. In some cases, embassy staff was unaware of their ability to refer cases for resettlement and had not been trained in refugee issues.
8. US government officials seem inclined to rely increasingly on UNHCR referrals, and may not realize that the UNHCR is often unprepared or does not have sufficient staff and other resources to serve as the front door for the US resettlement program.

Recommendations:

- C.1. The State Department should implement specific ways for embassy referrals to be implemented in the future, including clear instructions to the field. INS, JVA, and NGO staff should cooperate fully to make embassy referrals a viable avenue for resettlement of P-1 cases.
- C.2. InterAction agencies and other private sector organizations should consult with their partners in Africa, including African NGOs, to ensure that NGO staff is fully aware of the option of resettlement. Close working relationships between NGOs, UNHCR, and the Embassy should ensure that the US program has a "window" to potential refugee groups that otherwise would not come to the attention of government officials.
- C.3. UNHCR and the US government should work to ensure that more resources are allocated for the resettlement functions within UNHCR field offices. The US program should also expand the use of secondment agreements to UNHCR for the processing of specific caseloads. Without these important steps, the system will not function properly and refugees will be caught in a pipeline that could easily become clogged.
- C.4. INS should expand the use of asylum officers for both temporary and permanent assignments in overseas refugee processing posts. Training in African country conditions should be ongoing, and close monitoring should be conducted to assure quality adjudications.
- C.5. An annual process should be established for identifying potential new African refugee groups for whom US resettlement is the most viable option. For FY 1997, the following are examples of African refugee populations that, among others, should be considered for potential US resettlement:
 - * A group of 42 Ethiopian orphaned minors and young men at Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya;

- * Approximately 200 young Rwandan women left unaccompanied after the war, probably orphaned, who cannot return home and who are living in Nairobi under very difficult circumstances;
- * About 3,000 Oromo refugees (from Ethiopia) currently in Kenya, who have been closely related to the difficulties back home, and do not want to return and cannot stay forever in Kenya;
- * About 200 Zairian refugees in Zambia, who were closely connected with university associations and were victims of persecution in the early 1990's.
- * Small numbers of Angolan refugees in Zambia, who for various security reasons cannot return home during the upcoming repatriation program from Zaire and Zambia.

C.6. UNHCR should dedicate specific resources for maintaining and expanding training opportunities for field staff on protection, resettlement and other durable solutions for African refugees.

D. SIERRA LEONEAN INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Findings:

1. Since the Liberian conflict spilled over the border into Sierra Leone in 1991, as many as 1.5 million persons have become internally displaced. The great majority of these persons remain displaced despite the January 1996 elections that brought the hope of democracy to Sierra Leone. Although Freetown is widely regarded as safe, refugee aid workers upcountry resent the "official line" from the capital that the conflict has been resolved. In the area of Bo, where eight camps house approximately 250,000 displaced persons, where new arrivals come daily, and where the nearby rebel attacks continue on a regular basis, the war is still very much alive. The population continues to feel that the threat comes as much from current and former members of the Sierra Leonean military, as from actual rebel groups or from Liberian factional forces. What protection does exist comes primarily from bilateral agreements with ECOMOG contingents (primarily Nigerian and Guinean) and from a private South African "security" force.
2. Among Sierra Leoneans and many aid workers, there is a prevalent feeling that the Western world is paying much attention to Liberia but has become oblivious to Sierra Leone.
3. The renewed fighting in Monrovia continues to push home Sierra Leoneans who once sought refuge in Liberia. These refugees cross the border almost daily.

4. Internally displaced Sierra Leoneans receive WFP food rations as well as other assistance from numerous NGOs. A great deal of excellent work is being done both in Freetown and upcountry to assist displaced persons in camps and other living arrangements.
5. Because of the expense of the public school system, the majority of internally displaced children -- particularly those outside the Freetown area -- have received no schooling for up to five years. Starting up education programs for these children is one of the pressing issues for the NGOs in the Bo area.
6. The presence of about 20,000 Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone raises issues of equity in the assistance programs -- an issue particularly acute since many in Sierra Leone blame the Liberians for the conflict in their country. Although UNHCR does not officially assist the internally displaced population, it consults regularly with those agencies that provide such assistance.

Recommendations:

- D.1. The US government and NGOs should affirm their commitment to assist the development of democracy in Sierra Leone, while at the same time recognizing that the conflict continues and that much of the affected population remains in fear.
- D.2. The US should provide necessary resources to ensure that internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone continue to receive adequate assistance during this transition time. Special efforts should be made to provide for primary schooling for displaced children affected by the conflict in Sierra Leone.

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STATEMENT BY THE LIBERIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF RHODE ISLAND TO
THE HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE ON AFRICA
June 25, 1996

The disastrous effects of more than six years of war in Liberia are beyond description. We have watched in horror the total destruction of all our Institutions of Learning, Health Facilities, Public Utilities and most importantly, the killing of almost 250,000 of our fellow citizens. More than half the total population of our country are now considered refugees living under deplorable conditions in refugee camps scattered across west Africa. Anarchy has spread across more than eighty five percent of the country and the rule of law is in the hands of gun tooting youths, many of whom are barely twelve years old. The fate of our once proud and hard working people now lies in the hands of International Relief Agencies with very limited resources

We pray for an end to this misery so that our people can return to their homes to begin rebuilding the country. However, every attempt to bring about a solution to the crisis has been stifled by Mr. Charles Taylor and other "warlords". Our country is being held hostage by these "warlords" while they systematically loot the natural resources to enrich themselves, their families and to purchase arms. It is significant to note that the emphasis of the war in Liberia appears to have shifted from the acquisition of political power to that of personal wealth. The war has been as much a battle over commerce inside and beyond Liberia's borders as it has been a war for territory or control of the government. Private investors and in many instances multinational corporations operating with the full knowledge and support of their Governments have helped bankroll these "warlords" who have destroyed the country's infrastructure and rendered the nation virtually ungovernable. It has been reported and documented that between 1990-1991 a British firm, African Mining Consortium, Ltd., for example, paid Mr. Charles Taylor \$10 million a month for permission to ship iron ore from Liberia. A French-owned company, Sollac, also purchased stockpiled ore from Mr. Taylor. These men and their

associates continue to exercise exclusive control over parts of Liberia's territory. Since 1990 the "warlords" have presided, with the help of foreign commercial partners, over a vigorous trade in timber, minerals and agricultural products. This access to foreign exchange is the most important reason why the war still continue to rage. The proceeds from these illegal "transactions are being used to arm the fighters and accumulate wealth. It is important to note that some of the money from these illegal sales are being used to acquired properties here in the United states for some of the "warlords" and their associates. These "warlords" and their associates are amassing huge personal wealth while the rest of our people continue to perish from bullets, hunger and disease.

The 1992 UN arms embargo on Liberia has done nothing to halt the flow of weapons into the country. Ending the flow of arms to Liberia and the removal of the means to purchase these arms are very critical in bringing about a cessation of hostilities. Effective enforcement of the arms embargo and a total ban on all trade with the "warlords" will serve as disincentives to continue the senseless bloodshed.

In view of the foregoing, we hereby plead to the Honorable Members of the House Sub-Committee on Africa to help us take back our country from the "warlords" by taking the following actions:

1. tougher enforcement of the existing arms embargo. We have observed that large quantities of arms and ammunitions continue to flow into Liberia by way of the Ivory Coast and Guinea while Burkina Faso and Guinea are directly supporting some of the warring factions. We strongly request that Diplomatic and Economic pressures be applied on these countries so that their territories can no longer be used as a conduits for the supply of arms and mercenaries to Liberia. It is sad to note that Liberia once played a crucial role for the independence of some of these countries who are now aiding forces determined to destroy us as a Nation.

2. total economic embargo against any form of trade with the "warlords" and their associates and the freezing of all their assets. Since all these assets were acquired as the results of the unscrupulous exploitation of our country's natural resources, we ask that they be seized and turned over to any legitimate future government of Liberia.

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 142

Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 1996

Mr. BEREUTER (for himself, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. HOUGHTON, and Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Regarding the human rights situation in Mauritania, including the continued practice of chattel slavery.

Whereas the Government of Mauritania has perpetrated a prolonged campaign of human rights abuses and discrimination against its indigenous black population;

Whereas the Department of State and numerous human rights organizations have documented such abuses;

Whereas chattel slavery, with an estimated tens of thousands of black Mauritians considered property of their masters and performing unpaid labor, persists despite its legal abolition in 1980;

Whereas individuals attempting to escape from their owners in Mauritania may be subjected to severe punishment and torture;

Whereas the right to a fair trial in Mauritania continues to be restricted due to executive branch pressure on the judiciary;

Whereas policies designed to favor a particular culture and language have marginalized black Mauritanians in the areas of education and employment particularly;

Whereas Mauritanians are deprived of their constitutional right to a democratically elected government;

Whereas Mauritanian authorities have still refused to investigate or punish individuals responsible for the massacre of over 500 military and civilian black Mauritanians in 1990 and 1991; and

Whereas significant numbers of black Mauritanians remain refugees stripped of their citizenship and property, including approximately 70,000 black Mauritanians who were expelled or fled Mauritania during 1989 and 1990:
Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That the Congress—*

3 (1) calls upon the Government of Mauritania to
4 honor its obligations under the Universal Declaration
5 of Human Rights and the Convention on the
6 Abolition of Slavery, prosecute slave owners to the
7 fullest extent of the country's anti-slavery law, and
8 educate individuals being held as slaves on their
9 legal rights;

11 (4) calls upon the Government of Mauritania to
12 allow all refugees to return to Mauritania and to re-
13 store their full rights;

14 (5) welcomes Mauritania's recent willingness to
15 allow visits by international human rights organiza-
16 tions; and

17 (6) further welcomes the growth of an inde-
18 pendent press in Mauritania.

